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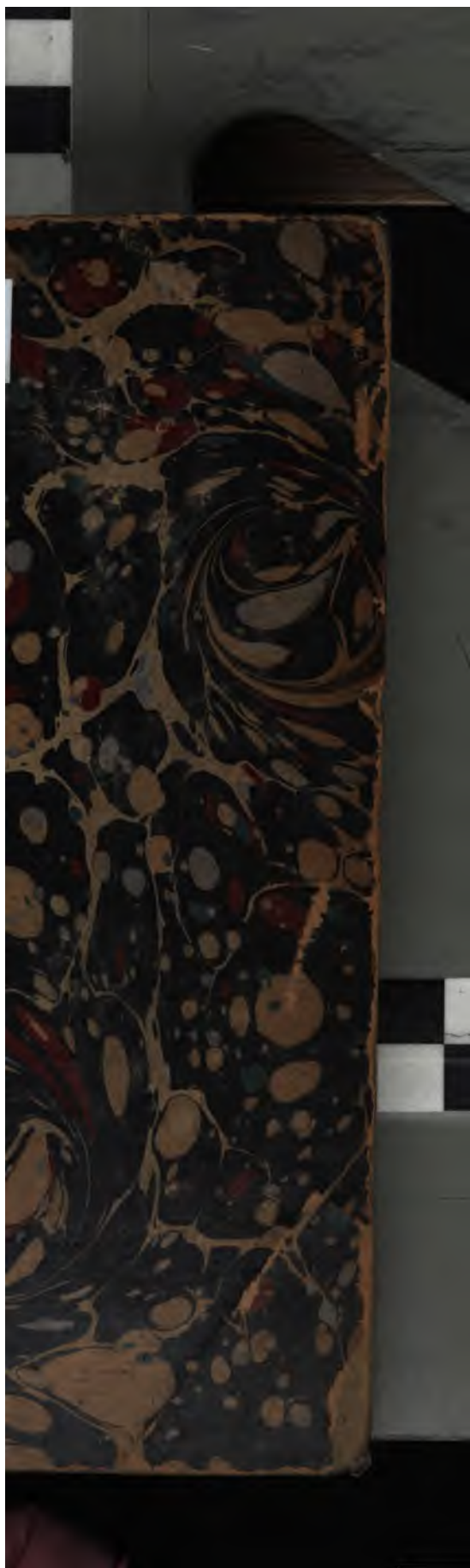
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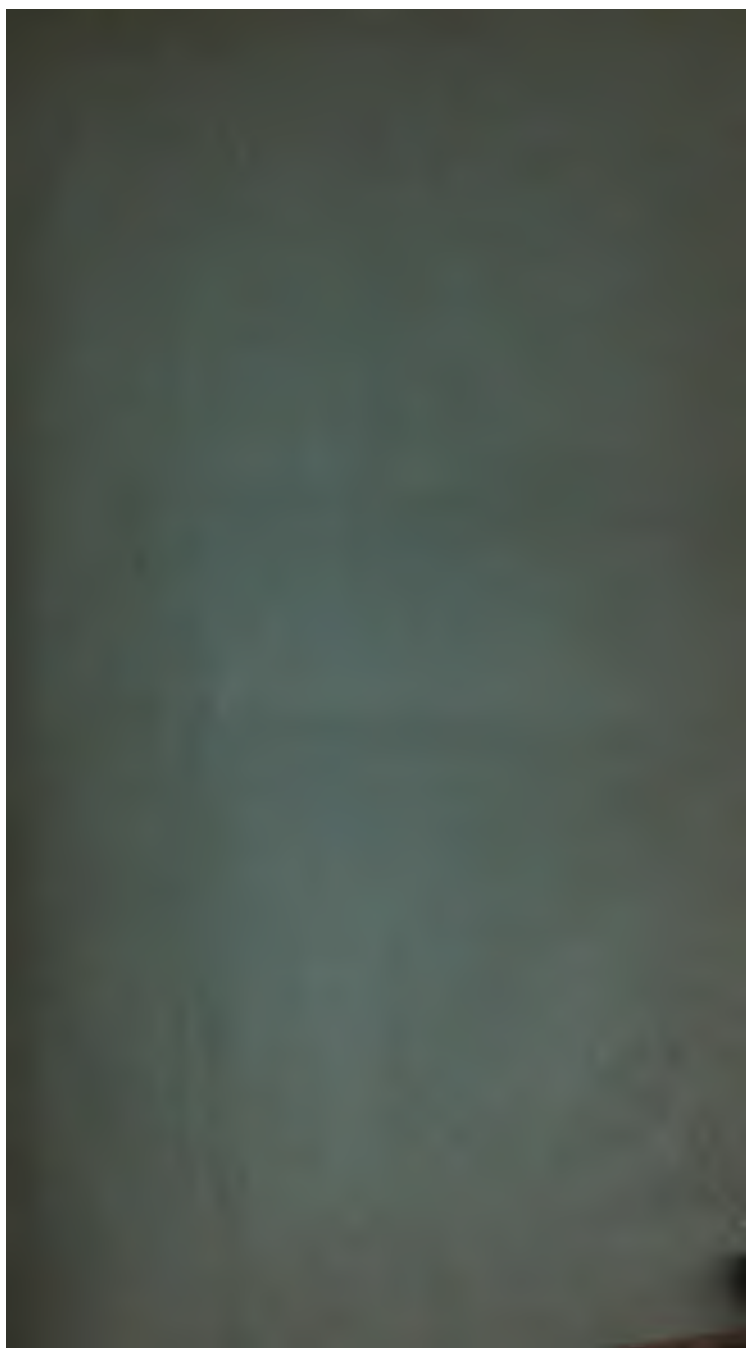
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1

# LOVE.

Lady Charlotte Susan Maria

BY THE AUTHORESS OF

*Campbell*

*afterwards, Berry*

"FLIRTATION," "THE DIVORCED," &c.

————— What 'tis to love:  
It is to be all made of sighs and tears;—  
It is to be all made of faith and service;—  
It is to be all made of fantasy,  
All made of passion, and all made of wishes;  
All adoration, duty, and observance;  
All humbleness, all patience, and impatience;  
All purity, all trial, all observance.

SHAKESPEARE.

Oh Love! what is it in this world of ours  
Which makes it fatal to be loved? Ah? Why  
With cypress branches hast thou wreathed thy bowers,  
And made thy best interpreter a sigh?

BYRON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



PHILADELPHIA:  
CAREY, LEA AND BLANCHARD.

1838

*J. A. S.*

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# L O V E.

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## CHAPTER I.

### RETROSPECTION.

That wealth and title sue to me,  
Glads me, I own, since 'tis for thee  
Such glorious glittering baubles I resign;  
Or should a smile my cheek adorn,  
Oh! trust me I but smile in scorn  
To think their merits should contend with thine.

THE LATE M. G. LEWIS, ESQ.

MISS ELTON was the beauty of her day; not merely a pretty girl in right of youth and freshness, but a decided beauty. One might have said of many of her contemporaries, they are charming, but Miss Elton was faultlessly handsome: the prince said so, the duke of — avowed it, Lord D. declared it, and so did the old applewoman at her stall, the untutored peasant at his plough, the commonest person in the street; yes, the homage she received was unquestioned and universal. It was pleasant to her to receive and to hear the various proofs of this power, and the variety of modes in which it was tendered; but nevertheless she was not spoiled by this adulation, or rendered heartless by living in the sunshine of prosperity. An indulgent maiden aunt had brought up this orphan heiress, and from her birth Mabel Elton had never heard any harsh word, never been rebuked, never known the common lot of humanity, or the roughness of existence; she had breathed a perfumed atmosphere, she had listened but to the music of fond affection. There seemed to her no end to life, or to its



happiness. At sixteen, such was the beautiful creature whose history still remains fresh in the recollection of those who trod the same opening path of fragrance, "with hearts as gay and faces half as fair." One of her friends at that early epoch of her existence said to her—

"I wonder, Mabel, to see you throwing away all your advantages, apparently indifferent to every thing, and every person; if I were you, nothing less than being a duchess would satisfy me; were you *only* handsome, you might rate yourself less high; but with your immense fortune, who is there that you could not command? either or any of your gifts is enough to fall to the portion of one individual; but, as you are, with all the adventitious circumstances of riches and ancient lineage, combined with charm and beauty, I shall only think you lack one thing, that is common sense, if you do not fill the highest station in the land: but you are not ambitious."

"I am ambitious,—you mistake me entirely, Emily; I am ambitious, but it is of love: not the degree and kind of love which satisfies the people I see; but a love such as I have the pattern of in my own mind, such as I see a vision of in my dreams, such as I could myself write of, but such as I never either saw or heard of in books, or in real life."

"This is the romance of sixteen, but it is most unfortunate that you should nourish it; I am not old, I am not ugly, Mabel, I may hope for a reasonable share of affection in marriage, but I have lived long enough to know that the love you talk about is merely ideal, a species of madness while it lasts, and then a gloomy disappointment—when repentance comes too late. Mabel, Mabel, you will rue the day when you sacrifice solid happiness to ideal rapture."

"The happiness I aim at is not ideal, it exists somewhere; the ambition I entertain is higher than all other ambition, for it can only be attained by a total abnegation of selfishness."

"Nonsense! Mabel. Pardon me for being so blunt of speech, self-love and social are the same, and as to love in its best estate, it is a selfish passion."

"Oh! how little you know about it! I will not talk any more on the subject, but my career is marked out; I'll live for love, and, not obtaining it, I'll die."

"I am glad to hear you pronounce that sibylline prediction in such a gay tone of voice, at least it proves to me that as yet there is no living object in whom you have embodied that vision."

Miss Elton laughed again, and saying she must dress for the ball at Lady Marlay's, left her more prudent friend in doubt whether she was in joke or in earnest.

A very short time after the above conversation, Miss Elton married Lord Herbert, the handsomest man of his time, with a fair fortune, a great reputation for good temper, and much liked by his own circle of intimates. According to usual custom, "the happy pair" (for that is the designation with which every pair sets forth on their matrimonial pilgrimage) set off for Moreton Park, and in the beauty of its scenery and the romantic aspect of the place, Lady Herbert beheld every accompaniment to the felicity of the state which she had chosen in preference to a thousand more brilliant alliances. Lord Herbert was delighted with the admiration she expressed and the interest she took in every thing that pertained to him. But three weeks of that dulcet moon, of which so much is said and sung, had not passed away, when Lord Herbert proposed their returning some of the visits of which a magnitude had been received from all the neighbourhood far and wide. A sudden shock, like that of being immersed in cold water, came over the youthful bride; and she thought, What! he wants company already! but she only said, "If you please, love."—"Well, then, go, dear Mabel, prepare your toilet, while I proceed to the stables and see that the barouche is got ready (it was the day of barouches), I must have every thing in nice order, for Sir Philip Gregory is a knowing one, and I should not like him to be able to find fault.—Make haste, love." And he looked so beautiful as he ran out without his hat, his fine hair waving about his brow, that Lady Herbert stood in admiration of him till he was lost to her sight; then she thought, and she sighed as she thought, "I wish he had not proposed these tiresome visits."

Her preparations were made long before her husband's; and while she waited for him, she took up "Thomson's Seasons," and opened at that part of spring where it is written, speaking of married lovers,

“What is the world to them,  
Its pomp, its pleasure, and its nonsense all!  
Who in each other clasp whatever fair  
High fancy forms, and lavish hearts can wish;  
Something than beauty clearer, should they look  
Or on the mind, or mind-illuminated face;  
Truth, goodness, honour, harmony, and love.”

“Ah!” she exclaimed, kissing the page, “that happiness is ours.” At that instant, Lord Herbert, driving four in hand, appeared standing up, like another Phaeton, and gracefully managing his high-mettled steeds; he circled round and round the area before the window at which she was placed—his eye fixed upon the horses, who, indeed, did seem to require all his skill and attention; and, having breathed them, he at length stopped before the door, and sent in to say he waited for Lady Herbert. She flew out; but paused at the step of the carriage, and looking up to her husband, said, “Francis, love, are you not coming in?”

“No, dear, I would not allow any one to drive you but myself; these horses have not been properly exercised, and they are rather hot.”

Lady Herbert therefore got in—alone.

“Are you cold, Mabel?” said her conductor, seeing her look rather pale, “wrap these cloaks round you, which I had put in for you; I was afraid you might feel chilly coming home.”

“Yoi ho, yo ho there; softly, my lads!” he said to his horses: and again he turned his attention to them.

Lady Herbert thought she would rather have had it turned upon herself; and she continued for a long fourteen miles drive, to ruminate on the pleasure of being alone in a brouche; one’s husband personifying coachman. At length they came to a high ground, overlooking the sea, and as the sun sank low in the horizon, surrounded by the gorgeous tints of his setting rays, she felt a burst of admiration which she could not control, and, rising up from her seat, and touching her husband’s shoulder, she exclaimed,

“Francis, Francis, look at that! is it not fine?”

“You forget, dear, that a coachman must look at no-

thing but his horses. It is no easy matter, I assure you, to conduct mine."

Lady Herbert sank down again. There was a sort of indescribable blank in her sensations, for which there is no name; and from this she was only roused by arriving in the grounds of Mount Easton.

Mount Easton was an old brick house, with long windows and white stone facings around them; it was not without its own peculiar character of beauty, had that character been preserved; but it was not, and so the whole thing was incongruous. Immediately opposite the entrance door the broken line of what had once been a fine avenue, and in its original intention afforded the visitant a speedy arrival at the house, was now exchanged for a circuitous road which turned off to the left, and, after going at least a mile out of the way through a dull park, conducted to the house. Sir Philip Gregory was standing on the steps which led to the entrance door, his hand shading his eyes to admire the coachmanship of his friend, as Lord Herbert circled round a difficult entrance and just neared the curbstone without grazing it, in capital style.

"A clever turn-out this, Herbert; why, you have got a new stud, I think. Lady Herbert, I am happy to have the honour of receiving you; Lady Gregory will be delighted, and my daughters—allow me to show you the way," giving her his arm. "Herbert, you are well acquainted with the house. I need not do the honours to *you*."

"If you allow me, I will just see my horses put up at the Crown, and be with you directly. They are young and very hot, and I do not like to trust them to any one but myself."

"By all means. We will order some luncheon for you, and the moment I have handed Lady Herbert to the drawing-room, I will follow you."

Lady Herbert looked after her husband, and said, in a low voice, "Pray, Francis, do not stay long away;" then suffered herself to be conducted into the presence of Lady Gregory. The usual compliments were exchanged, and Sir Philip apologized for leaving her.

Lady Gregory hoped the roads were in good order, and that her ladyship had not been frightened at Higham Hill;

and that she had not suffered from the cold: "we have had most unseasonable weather hitherto. All our crocuses and mezerions were in full bloom at this time last year; but now we have not a single blossom out, of the earliest kind. Laura, my eldest daughter, is in despair: she says she has nothing to paint from. Does your ladyship paint?"

"I am fond of the art, but I have had so little success in it, that I should rather at once say no—than give my attempts any pretension to be called paintings."

"Here comes Laura. Laura, Lady Herbert. Lady Herbert, allow me—Miss Gregory." Lady Herbert said something civil, alluding to the talent she had been told she possessed, and requested to be allowed to see some of her works. Lady Gregory was delighted. The portfolio was quickly found; and its contents were neither good enough to praise, nor bad enough to laugh at; it was difficult to know how to treat the subjects of expected commendation, looking upon them, but Lady Herbert was gentle and sweet, and got through the task much to the satisfaction of the Gregories; and, afterwards, having exhausted all the common-place topics of common-place acquaintance, her spirits failed her, and she knew not what to have recourse to for conversation. Breaking out at once, she said,

"I am afraid, Lady Gregory, it will be very late before we reach home. Lord Herbert has surely forgotten the hour in the agreeable society of Sir Philip. May I request the favour of your letting him know I am waiting for him?"

Lady Gregory was about to comply, when the gentleman entered.

"Mabel, love," said Lord Herbert, "Sir Philip has been so kind as to press us to remain here all night, so I have sent off the groom for Martha and your paraphernalia, and accepted Sir Philip's kind invitation."

"I am charmed to hear it," said Lady Gregory, so warmly, that Lady Herbert was ashamed to feel as sorry as she did, and endeavoured to profess herself exceedingly pleased, although she wondered what *could* have induced her husband to adopt such a plan. When, however, she heard the encomiums Sir Philip passed upon his horses and equipage, and observed the delight and attention with which the lat-

ter listened to him, and, in return, complimented him upon his skill and science in all matters connected with the stable, her wonder ceased, for she knew it was a subject which interested Lord Herbert deeply, and she sighed to think how little she was capable of entering into his tastes in this respect; however, she determined to listen and to learn, and, if possible, become fond of that which formed one of the principal occupations of his life. But she could not divest herself of the feeling that it was rather early days after their marriage, to be neglected for horses and dogs; above all, she felt that *she* did not wish for any other society than her husband's, nay, that all else was irksome to her. Nevertheless, she did not *express* this feeling, and *seemed* pleased with his having settled to stay all night at Mount Easton. After dinner the party was enlivened by the arrival of the eldest son, Tom Gregory, as his father called him.

He made apologies for coming home so late, saying, he had rode a steeple-chase with Dick Winstanley.

"And won it?" asked his father, eagerly.

"Beat him hollow—his rip of a horse was blown directly, it was hardly any triumph to win, only there was some high betting upon the match. I touched a hundred myself, and as to poor Dick, he's fairly cleared out." Sir Philip rejoined, "he has not much chance with Tom, that is certain—by the by, we can show Lord Herbert some good sport to-morrow. My gamekeeper tells me that there's a badger down by the water-dam, and the dogs are in excellent order; we can have besides farmer Saunders's terriers—do, my lord, stay; I think you will see as clever a set of *varment* dogs as ever unearthed a badger."

"Lady Gregory, I hope you will join your entreaties to ours," said Sir Philip, "to persuade Lady Herbert to remain with us."

"I am sure," turning to the latter, "Lady Gregory and Laura will do their best to amuse you. Lady Gregory is not a bad whip herself, she has two as clever little ponies as ever you saw, and will drive you over to Warley. Very good shops there, I am told; do, Lady Herbert, do promise to stay?"

Lady Herbert lifted her eyes imploringly to her husband; but he did not, or would not understand their meaning;

and, turning to Sir Philip, said, "Well, then, it is impossible to resist your hospitality. Mabel, dear, you can send for any thing you want to Moreton Park. We will not refuse our kind friend's invitation."

Lady Gregory expressed her unfeigned delight, and so did Miss Gregory. A sign was made by the former to leave the dining-room, and the ladies were alone, and at liberty to discuss dress and scandal. Unfortunately, neither of these had any charm for Lady Herbert, and she looked forward with dread to the time she was to spend in their society.

Lady Gregory commenced a disputation upon the best mode of feeding and bringing up young turkeys, and lamented that the stable establishment was so large, she never could persuade Sir Philip to let her have a sufficiency of other domestics to do the necessary work of the other departments.

"Young turkeys, your ladyship knows, require almost as much attention as young children."

"Indeed, mamma, I don't believe," said Miss Gregory, "that Lady Herbert either knows or cares any thing about the matter."

"I'm sure you had better leave her quiet, to take a little rest before the gentlemen join us. Do, Lady Herbert, do put up your feet on the sofa, and let me place the pillows for you."

Lady Herbert was thankful for this interference, and gladly accepted Miss Gregory's kind attention.

Lady Gregory apologized for having entered upon the education of turkeys.

"I assure you," replied the good-humoured Lady Herbert, "I am exceedingly fond of animals of every kind, and if I lived much in the country, I should take great pleasure in seeing them; but hitherto I have not had any opportunity of cultivating their acquaintance: I intend to do so, and then I shall hope to profit by your experience, Lady Gregory, if you are so kind as to give me your counsel."

Thus having made her peace with the latter, she tried to open another source of conversation with the daughter.

"Have you a good library?" she asked; "are you fond of reading?"

"You would not call it a good library, for it consists of the Racing Calendar, and Daniel's Book of Sports, and a

few old musty-looking books on divinity; but in my room I have a tolerable collection of all the modern novelists, and also of the poets."

"Are you fond of poetry, then?"

"Exceedingly. I love the music of it."

Lady Herbert thought, "This girl cannot be altogether devoid of feeling," and was herself such a passionate lover of poetry, that it made her lean to any one who expressed a similar taste.

"And you sing, Miss Gregory?"

"Yes; but I am afraid not in a way that would please you."

"Do not be so very diffident of your own powers, my dear," said her mother. "Sing directly, and allow Lady Herbert to judge for herself."

She obeyed her mother, and pleased Lady Herbert, for she sang without affectation. Her voice was mellifluous, and she pronounced the words distinctly. The song was then new, and not hackneyed as it has since become.

"When time, who steals our years away."

"How these words touch one's heart," said Lady Herbert. "One feels as if one had written them oneself, so truly do they echo the wishes of the heart. I wish Francis could hear you, I am sure he would be delighted. Do you not think your father will come soon to join us?"

Miss Gregory laughed.

"Papa never comes from the dining-room till five minutes before we retire for the night, unless there are a party of gentlemen to play at billiards with him; but perhaps for you, Lady Herbert, he may possibly come sooner than usual."

Lady Herbert made no answer; but inwardly she thought how very dreadful to have no companion in one's husband; to see him day after day, preferring the company of fox-hunters or boors, to that of his wife. And for a moment she shuddered; then dismissing the horrid supposition, she thought *that* can never be *my* case; and again she tried to listen to the music. The clock seemed never to move; and yet she heard ten, eleven, and twelve strike.

"Would you like to retire to bed," said Lady Gregory, "or will you take some wine-and-water first?"



The answer was prevented by the entrance of the gentlemen.

"Mabel, love," said Lord Herbert, approaching his wife, and leaning over the back of the sofa on which she sat. "Mabel, I fear it is late," he whispered; "but we have had some capital fun with Tom Gregory. Such a cub! His father is an excellent creature, and one of the best judges of horseflesh in the kingdom. But as to him, he is really a vulgar fellow, though very amusing; that is to say—you understand, love—not at all in *your* way. But sometimes I like a little dash of that sort of thing; nevertheless, you know I have been longing to come to you this hour past. We have not drank any wine (his breath and thick pronunciation belied the assertion;) but Lady Herbert made no answer, only pressed his hand, and he felt that such society, or any society, could not have detained her from *his* presence.

The conversation became very flat, and two or three times Sir Gregory started up, shaking his head to prevent himself from falling into a deep sleep. Lady Gregory rang for candles, and so passed that dull evening.

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## CHAPTER II.

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### THE HONEYMOON.

So dear I love him, that with him all deaths  
I could endure, without him live no life.

MILTON'S PARADISE LOST, book ix.

THE next day Lady Herbert thought, "Well! this is over, and I shall be at home to-day alone with Francis;" but what was her disappointment at finding that the badger's hunt was to take place in honour of Lord Herbert, and that it would be too late when the sport was finished to think of returning to Moreton Park. Lady Herbert did her best to

smile and seem pleased, but her spirits sank, and it was with difficulty she restrained her tears; the unceasing attention of Lady Gregory to procure her every little comfort, and the less troublesome kindness of her equally obliging daughter, made Lady Herbert reproach herself for receiving these marks of good will ungraciously, and continued to be so agreeable, that she seemed to them a very charming person; an offer was made to drive her to the neighbouring town to visit Mr. Hartlebury's famous shop, or may be your ladyship would like to see the gentlemen at their sport, or if you ever fish we have some very famous trout in Mounteaston-river; but Lady Herbert declined all these temptations, and proposed reading aloud to Miss Gregory while she painted. The latter was delighted at her proposal, and that mode of disposing of the day was the one agreed upon. Lady Herbert was fond of reading, fond of various occupations, understood agricultural pursuits, and delighted in the pleasures of a garden, but although something of all these topics entered into their discourse, and formed part of their morning's conversation, Lady Herbert's thoughts reverted to the idea she had formed to herself of married comfort, of young and passionate love, and they appeared one and all flat, stale, and unprofitable to her, since he whose companionship she had looked forward to as partaker in all her tastes, recreations and pursuits, was *not* her companion, was *no sharer* in what formed the delight and dignified employment of her existence; so she sank into sadness. Miss Gregory observed she was not well, and besought her to retire to her apartment and rest till dinner-time. Unable for longer exertion of spirits Lady Herbert availed herself of the proposal: and there, in listless vacuity of mind, which prevented her from analyzing her thoughts and feelings, she awaited the return of Lord Herbert. A noise of dogs and men's voices, just as it grew dark, announced his arrival; she flew to the window; he called to her, at the same time kissing his hand; she opened the sash: "Look here, love," showing the mangled carcass of an unfortunate badger, "we have had capital sport, I never saw such dogs! poor Haco has suffered a little, but he'll soon come round again. I am just going to the stable to tell the groom how to dress the wound in his leg, and then be with you, love, directly."

Lord Herbert looked so handsome, his countenance

flushed with the ruddy hue of health, and his fine form replete with grace and activity, that she forgot in the pleasure of seeing him, the pain that she should see him under such an aspect of hopeless portent to her future comfort. Again at night the pleasures of the bottle maintained their sway, and she was convinced that so long as they remained at Mount Easton, the same mode of passing the time would continue. She ventured on the third day to ask her husband if he was not tired of that sort of life.

"No; I enjoy it exceedingly, love, for a change; but if you are tired, let us go home."

"I should prefer Moreton Park," she replied, "greatly, for though Lady Gregory and her daughters are exceedingly obliging, we have not two ideas in common; and to-day, while I read to Miss Gregory, I was aware that she did not take any interest in the subject of the book; you know I cannot busy myself with the working contrivances of my sex, and I am so utterly at a loss what to say to the generality of young ladies of my own age, that I am sure my society is as unpleasant to them as theirs is to myself. At home I never *can* feel *désœuvré*; in the first place, and that implies every place, and every power of charm, I enjoy *your* society, and while you are otherwise engaged, I have there my own pursuits and enjoyments, of which I cannot grow tired, at least not so long as I hope to see you return, and approve and admire what I have been planning or putting into effect, either as regards our garden or the cultivation of the few talents I possess."

"You know, my dear Mabel, I always admire every thing you do: so let us go home again, dear, I cannot bear the idea of your being bored."

Lady Herbert felt quite happy at her husband's kind manner, and flattered herself that this passing cloud to her felicity had blown over; but, just as they were making their last adieus to the Gregories, Lord Herbert said, as if a sudden thought had struck him—

"By the way, that comical fellow, Crookshanks, comes to me next Saturday. I am sure he will amuse you, Mabel; he has all the poets by heart, and it is irresistibly droll to see him twitching about his hideous features with all the love sentiments coming out of his mouth. Do, Tom, there's a good fellow, do come and meet him; we will pledge him till he is up in alt, and we shall have inimitable fun, de-

pend upon it. We can ride over to Tracey's and see his kennel next day; and I am sure Lady Herbert will be delighted if Sir Gregory and Lady Gregory will join our party."

Lady Herbert was so astonished, that she actually did not know what to reply.

"And, by the way," resumed Lord Herbert, "Mabel is quite alone in the barouche, perhaps Miss Gregory would kindly come with us *now*."

"Yes," said Lady Herbert, at a loss what to say, "I am quite alone." And she was obliged to second her husband's proposal. Although she could not account for his strange infatuation in regard to the Gregories, and that after having told him she was exceedingly tired of their society, and requested as the greatest favour to go back to Moreton Park; that he should suddenly prolong the annoyances of which she complained, was a caprice she could not account for; but there was no opportunity afforded her of representing the dislike she felt to the Gregory society, or of entreating her husband to defer the evil day of their visit;—neither had she any ground of complaint against the ladies of the family, except that unanswerable one—'she did not like them.' So the matter ended by Miss Gregory's accompanying Lady Herbert in her barouche, and the rest of the family being engaged to come in a few days and take her back. Lady Herbert had thought it hard to be *alone*, that is to say, to have been left by her husband the morning of their arrival at Mount Easton; but now her mind was out of tune, and the presence of an indifferent person was irksome to her beyond endurance. Miss Gregory, however, though one of those persons who might be called commonplace, had a good deal of common sense, which served her very well for daily use, and, on the present occasion, prevented her making herself more disagreeable to Lady Herbert than her actual presence effected. She remained silent after the first two or three efforts to engage her companion in conversation, and once arrived at Moreton Park, Lady Herbert could not avoid paying her the courtesies due to any guest in her own house, so that the good-natured Miss Gregory only supposed Lady Herbert had felt disinclined to talk, and that now she should find her the same charming person she had thought her at Mount Easton.

When Lord Herbert was alone with his wife, he made

her many apologies for having invited the Gregories; but, he said, "it was the only way I could think of to get home without rudeness; for Sir Philip had on the previous evening, settled that a large party of gentlemen should have dined to meet *me*, and arranged a fishing scheme, and I know not what other devices, to detain and amuse us."

"You are aware, dear Mabel, I could not have got away without showing some civility in return; and, you know, at home one can always manage every thing in the manner one likes best, so that no great discomfort can arise from having company in one's own house; therefore, I hope, dear, you will forgive me."

"Oh," said Lady Herbert, fondly, "it is not the Gregories, or any one else that I object to—but only—that—I thought so soon after our marriage we should have been *alone*, and quiet together, to learn each other's ways and wishes, and to become certain of what would please, and what would not."

Lord Herbert laughed, and pressing his wife in his arms, kissed her kindly and said—"Oh dear, Mabel, I was afraid you would be tired of me and out of prudence I endeavoured to procure a little change of society for you; we shall not love each other the less, but the more, depend upon it, for having a few friends to share our happiness."

Lady Herbert felt her husband's manner to be so affectionate, that to have quarrelled with him for not feeling *with* her would have been unjust, cruel, wrong; and, although her heart did not assent to his opinion, but, on the contrary, made her more than ever conscious that she felt entirely opposed to him on most subjects, on the one great vital question she thought there was no difference—that of loving each other. "No," she said to herself when she was alone; "it is not, thank God, it is not the matter of this question which troubles and alarms me, it is only the *manner* which sometimes chills—sometimes terrifies me. This is wrong, perhaps; it may be that no man can feel as a woman feels—no man can be so entirely wrapped up in another's being, as a woman is in the man she loves. But this knowledge, if it is indeed a fact, it is a melancholy one. Why did I not know it sooner? Why did I not prepare myself for its consequences? I remember Emily told me I was weaving a tissue of misery

for myself; but she was wrong—*she* never loved—she knows nothing about love.”

A few days passed. Miss Gregory was not in the least troublesome. She spent her mornings chiefly in the conservatory, painting flowers from nature. Lord Herbert walked with his wife through his plantations; meditated new walks and new farm-buildings, of which she gave the designs and plans; entered into her tastes as to the disposal of the garden; and in fine, was her companion and friend, her husband and lover. In the evening he listened to Miss Gregory’s music; and as he had a fine natural voice, he sometimes sang a second with her from ear; and thus time passed in heavenly peace with Lady Herbert: she only wished such happiness might last for ever.

On the fifth day after their return, just as they were sitting down to dinner, a ring at the outward gate announced a visiter.

“Who can it be?” said Lady Herbert.

“I cannot imagine,” rejoined her husband, “unless it be Crookshanks; for Sir Philip and Lady Gregory do not arrive till to morrow. If it is my old master Crookshank, I must prepare you, ladies, for a most grotesque figure. His name is most unfortunately appropriate to his person, which is twisted into every manner of shape, like a gnarled oak; his head large, and exactly resembling those nutcrackers which are to be bought at a fair; he is full of learning, and verses, and Latin and Greek, for aught I know; very ridiculous, but a good creature, and when put up to it with a little more wine than usual, exceedingly amusing.”

The door opened, and Mr. Adolphus Crookshanks was announced.

“You are come exactly in time for dinner, my dear sir. I am delighted to see you, and beg leave to present Lady Herbert to you.”

It is a great honour, and allow me to add, a great pleasure, too, to look upon your lordship’s wife, and upon so fair a lady, of whom Jove himself might well have been proud to see presiding at the feast of the gods, or rather, like Philip’s warlike son, I should address you, my lord:

Aloft, in awful state,  
The godlike hero sat  
On his imperial throne.

His valiant peers were placed around;  
 Their brows with roses and myrtles crown'd.  
     The lovely Thais by his side,  
     Sat, like a blooming eastern bride,  
     In flower of youth and beauty's pride.  
 Happy, happy, happy pair!  
     None but the brave,  
     None but the brave,  
 None but the brave deserve the fair!

"Bravo! Mr. Adolphus Crookshanks. I am happy to find you have not forgotten the Muses, and that your memory is as well stored as ever with our choicest verse."

"Yes, my lord," said the little schoolmaster, rising upon his tiptoes, and moving his hideous wide mouth upon one side—I thank the fates I have ever been a follower of the 'Nine,' and, though not Apollo, I have caught a few of his notes; and, at your leisure, after refection, I will, if the company permit me, recite an epithalamium, which I composed in honour of your lordship's nuptials."

"By all means, Mr. Adolphus; by all means. The specimen of your recitation which you have just bestowed upon us, must render these ladies desirous of hearing your verses; and, as to myself, you know the admiration I have always entertained for your talents."

Lord Herbert looked at his wife, who was perfectly aware of the mystification which had already begun to be exercised on the unfortunate dwarf, but she did not enter into the feeling of that anticipated amusement which Lord Herbert seemed to promise himself in his society. On the contrary, she was disgusted with his appearance, and still more so with the manner in which he mouthed Dryden's poetry. Instead of laughing, she looked grave, and said something which was intended to be civil.

"Your ladyship is too good; but goodness is the great characteristic, I should opine, of that angelic countenance.

"Suffer me, my lord, to remind you of those lines of Dryden's, so applicable I cannot refrain from repeating them.

"'Oh! what perfections must that charmer share,  
 Who fairest is confess'd, where all are fair.'"<sup>22</sup>

"We are greatly beholden to you, my good sir, for your courteous praise; but dinner is announced, and I am certain your wit will flow brighter still at the convivial board." So saying, he offered Miss Gregory his arm, and desired Mr. Adolphus to lead out Lady Herbert. The latter felt as though a toad was approaching her, and with an impulse of horror she could not repel, she started aside, and, running past him, took her place at the table.

Lord Herbert laughed heartily.

"Why did you not run, too, Adolphus?" said Lord Herbert. "Your gallantry is all bestowed on the Muses, I fear."

"Pardon me, my lord, but I was afraid, had I pursued, the fair one might have been turned into a laurel, and then what would have become of your lordship?"

"Very true; an apt simile. You are always Apollo—Magnus Apollo. In all your common life, there is a touch of Helicon; pray taste it in this wine"—pouring out an immense tumbler, and offering it to him.

At that moment, Mr. Thomas Gregory was announced, splashed up to the eyes in a sort of sporting costume, that rendered his person more glaringly offensive than it was by nature.

"He had been," he said, "to earth up some foxes, and the roads were in horrid condition. He hoped Lady Herbert would excuse his undress."

He was soon quite at his ease, and the conversation lay entirely between him and Lord Herbert, who plied the unfortunate Mr. Adolphus with toast upon toast, till he could hardly speak; and his hideous mouth twisted itself in vain into every horrid contortion, making attempts to recite the epithalamium of which he had spoken before dinner. This, Lord Herbert called "fun," and Lady Herbert felt it to be a degradation. She went through the whole scene, however, in patient gravity; but, when she thought it was time to leave the room, her husband whispered to her, "Don't be a kill-joy, Mabel, dear."

So she pressed his hand, remained for a short time longer, and tried to smile, but the tear was ready to start. Her spirits had been taxed to their utmost, and, as soon as she was alone in her apartment, she did not attempt to restrain them.

"Is this the life of Love?" she asked herself, "to which



I had looked forward. Is there any ennobling pursuit, any improving study, any reciprocity of mind to be obtained from such associates as these?" and her tears flowed faster. "It is only five weeks to-day since we were married, and already he finds it necessary to have recourse to these, and *such* as these persons, for entertainment. It is impossible that he loves me—it is impossible he ever should have loved me. But I will not show that I feel thus; I will be to him all that he is not to me,"—and, sobbing and swallowing her sighs, she plunged her beautiful face in water, shook the glittering glory of her hair from off her forehead, and succeeded in dressing her feature in smiles, while anguish was at her heart.

When she returned to Miss Gregory in the drawing-room, she found her netting assiduously, in the calm repose of an habitual absence of all enjoyment, and in that serene frame of being, which knows no transport and dreads no pangs. Lady Herbert looked at her with envy, and thought "It would be far happier for me were I like her; and yet I cannot wish to be so either."

The monosyllabic conversation took place which generally ensues between two persons situated in regard to each other as they were; but Miss Gregory was so sensible and gentle, that if she did not elicit any thing brilliant from her companion, neither did she provoke her to any feeling of disgust.

Lady Herbert soon discovered that it was not requisite, neither was it expected by Miss Gregory, that she should exert herself to amuse her, and from that moment the wish arose in her breast to do so. She asked her various questions respecting her life and her tastes, and she found what was to her a novel discovery, that it was possible to be happy without excitement of any sort, without a hope or rather without an expectation of being admired—without any wish to shine in the world—without any desire to be more than her mother was, and ever had been, to her father, a quiet, affectionate, good wife, fulfilling the duties of her station day by day—never questioning the supreme power of her husband over her thoughts, words, and actions, and content to glide through life in tranquillity unobserved—in humbleness of mind, secured alike from temptation spiritual or temporal. "This is," thought Lady Herbert, "very wonderful; I wish I could do so likewise."

but she did not wish it in her heart—she only wished to escape from her actual dissatisfaction and disappointment. It requires long years of schooling, and bowing down, and bending even to breaking the heart, before the nature of the creature is changed; and even then, what does such schooling produce in *such* beings? a seared and withered view of the prospects of this world, but not an effectual change of character or sentiment.

Lady Herbert looked at Miss Gregory with a feeling allied to respect, as she saw her from day to day fulfilling the duties allotted to her, and if Lady Herbert had not thought her at times an excuse for Lord Herbert's being out all day, and leaving her during the evenings alone with her friend, she would have been rather fond of this gentle "automaton," as she called her.

Time lapsed, and with it Lady Herbert's illusions. She had, in fact, nothing to complain of, but every thing to lament. She was loved, it was true, but *how* was she loved? with that sort of commonplace animal affection, which she loathed and scorned. The prosecution of intellectual pursuits, to which she had looked forward as being so enchanting, when pursued together with a beloved object—the looking up to her husband as to some "bright particular star, whose worth was far above her"—all these anticipations of a happiness she was never to enjoy, had vanished; she saw the object whom she had worshipped leading a life of low joviality, sporting and drinking in the country, and frequenting theatres and shows when in town.

Poor Lady Herbert! to whom could she complain? to whom *would* she complain? It so chanced that during that first summer of her marriage, on the evening after a sultry day, she had flown from the disgusting jargon of a set of sporting men, and, seeking the cool of the garden, endeavoured to lose all sense of her sorrow in the balmy atmosphere of the flowers, and the pure rolling waters of a brook that flowed through a neighbouring wood. When she had walked a considerable way from the house, she sat down to consider and examine the state of her feelings. The place was covered with wild flowers; the ringdoves were cooing to their mates, the squirrels were leaping from tree to tree, and the last twitter of the birds tremulously expressed their notes of love while settling to their night's

repose. Lady Herbert plucked the flowers that grew around; they were of a peculiar kind, indigenous to that particular spot, and redolent of a *peculiar* perfume. Lord Herbert had once brought her some. The power of fragrance in awakening associations of delight had been sung and said:

“Oh, yes, of all the senses, sure  
None is so exquisitely pure,  
As that which bids the mind retrace  
Remembrances time might efface.  
Oh! who that e'er knew joy or pain,  
Owns not the thrill in every vein,  
When sudden some sweet scent conveys  
Records of half-forgotten days?  
Some balmy breath beloved then seems  
To give us back our tenderest dreams;  
Some glance, with eloquence to speak  
In language to which words are weak.”

In every thrilling nerve she felt this truth, and with an anguish of heart that the very young, and the very passionate, and the very refined alone can know, she wept those first bitter tears of utter disappointment that scald the breast on which they fall. She wept long, and without stint or measure; she was now aware that there was no fear her absence would be missed. She might as well sit there and weep, as go home and endeavour to employ herself in vain, where she knew the loud and boisterous mirth would swell occasionally on her ear, with its discordant sound.

The night drew in before she thought of returning, and, when she began to grow chill, she was startled by the sound of footsteps, and heard her name repeatedly called by that dear voice, which, for a moment, chased every thought but the fondness which it elicited, and charmed away her recent despair.

“Mabel! Mabel!” said Lord Herbert, approaching, and conducting two persons, one of whom she immediately recognised to be her aunt, Lady Colebrook.

“We have been looking for you every where.” Lady Colebrook was kind enough to surprise us on her way to Somerton; and, by some lucky chance, Lord de Montmorenci, my *old* guardian, also arrived at the same moment.”

Surprise had had the effect of restoring Lady Herbert's self-possession, and, by drawing her out of her own thoughts, enabled her to assume a cheerful tone of voice as she pressed her aunt in her arms, and felt all a daughter's tenderness in seeing her once again. The deepening twilight concealed the traces of her tears, and she was presented to Lord de Montmorenci, whose connexion with her husband assured him the kindest reception.

By the arrival of these persons, so unexpectedly, a thorough change was made in Lady Herbert's immediate feelings, and the rabble rout having dispersed, like evil things on the approach of purer spirits, she was, for a brief space, made happy in the presence of those dearest to her; whilst in Lord de Montmorenci she beheld a person whose air and demeanour at once bespoke him not one of the common herd. Lord Herbert had a thousand things to talk over with his friend; and Lady Colebrook was glad of an opportunity to converse apart with her dear daughter, as she called Lady Herbert; but suddenly she ceased speaking, and, looking earnestly at her, saw Lady Herbert had been crying; but she was too wise to ask any questions,—only when she laid her head on the pillow that night, she offered up to heaven a more fervent prayer than ever for her child's happiness.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE PROGRESS OF TIME.

In looking back unto my follies past,  
While I the present, with times past compare,  
And think how many hours I then did waste,  
Painting on clouds, and building in the air;  
I sigh within myself, and say in sadness,  
This thing which fools call love is nought but madness.

FROM PHILOPATEUS'S OLDEN PHRASEOLOGY.

*Vide Specimens of Early English Poets.*

LADY HERBERT was too happy the next day not to be communicative, and, without telling exactly all she felt,

and thought, and feared, her aunt knew perfectly the whole history of her heart.

"My dearest Mabel, believe me, though happiness does not wear the precise dress in which you had fancifully clothed it, it is happiness still. So long as your husband is true to you—so long as he loves you in his own way, that is, as well as he *can* love, you have no reason to be dissatisfied. Poor dear! in some degree, in some shape or other, sorrow must come to all; we hear this in very early youth, as we hear the wind which we think will never come nigh our dwelling, to scatter it to dust; but the storm will come in such a way as to make itself be felt. You cannot always be Mabel Elton, with your poor old aunt to spoil you. You have now the duties of a wife; and will, I hope, have those of a mother to fulfil; neither are without their cares and troubles; but do not magnify either,

'Nor yet despise, though void of winning art,  
The plain but honest courtship of the heart.'

After all, dear Mabel, there are but few men whose avocations and tastes so engross them, that they do not like sometimes to indulge in field sports, and in the society which these necessarily draw around them. So long as they are not wholly the slaves of them, but are resorted to as recreations, be not too *exigente*: you will only lose your hold over your husband's affections without changing habits; bear with him, my dear, and, as times go on, these pleasures will leave him if he does not leave them—at all events, do not allow yourself to be uselessly unhappy."

All this was good advice and true. Lady Herbert sighed, and felt it was so; but it never changed her heart. What she saw of Lord de Montmorenci, delighted her. She hoped that in his society her husband would find that interest and charm, which would wean him from less eligible companions; the more so, as he partook in Lord Herbert's amusements, without any of the attendant grossness by which they are too often accompanied.

In the hearts of the young, hope is vigorous, it shoots forth with renewed bloom after a check. Lady Herbert believed that the present amendment would be perfected, and blamed herself for having been captious. She listened with great interest to Lord de Montmorenci's account of

his travels in the east. Her husband seemed equally to take part in the hair-breadth escapes and exploits, which, however modestly narrated, threw a lustre over the character of him who had been the hero of the story. Lady Herbert thought, she wished it had been her own love who *had gone* through those perils, and who was now safe relating them, and yet she clung closer to his side, as she heard the fearful detail, and thanked God that he was by her side. Such are the contradictory sentiments of the human heart, at least of some hearts. As day succeeded to day, and as Lord de Montmorenci's presence appeared to secure her her husband's society, unaccompanied by any of those whom she conceived to be, as they really were, inimical to his interests and derogatory to his honour as a human being, she became attached to her husband's friend, and the more so as he seemed to invest Lord Herbert with all those talents and qualities which he himself possessed. Lord Herbert had a great power of pleasing, when he chose to exercise the gift, and his manners captivated, from the apparent frankness and kindness which, on first acquaintance, each person on whom they acted, believed to be shown peculiarly towards themselves. Lord de Montmorenci was particularly charmed with his young friend, and he loved him sincerely. Though a very few years older than himself, he had been left Lord Herbert's guardian by his late father's will; who assigned, as a reason for doing so, the high opinion he entertained of the race of the De Montmorencies. When Lord Herbert came of age, only a few months previously to the return of his guardian to England, he had written to the latter saying, in a joking way, "If you do not make haste, dear papa, you will find me a married man, and out of your leading-strings," &c. Lord de Montmorenci had been unavoidably detained in quarantine, and, accordingly, only arrived to wish him joy of that irrevocable step, which being done, could not be undone, and which now, both as guardian and friend, he had only to hope would prove to be all that it promised: a beauty, an heiress, sweet-tempered—such were the outward and visible signs this marriage presented to Lord de Montmorenci's view, and every hour that he passed in their society unfolded some new charm, some new merit in Lady Herbert's character.

When he became intimate with Lady Colebrook, he chided her jokingly for her imprudence in having allowed

the young couple to be united till such time as his own consent could have been given in form. She laughed and replied,

"I must confess a secret to you; prudence ought to be the accompaniment of gray hairs, but I never had much when I was young, and I do not find that advancing years brings me any supply of that necessary evil. My young people did not like delays; I did not like to make any. I never contradicted Mabel in her short life—I governed her by love alone, if I could ever have been said to govern her; *her* wishes have been mine—mine hers. Many will think, I have been a fool—worse, perhaps, but if it were to do over again, I would do the same; love is the principle, whereby every thing great and good may be achieved;—is it not the governing law of the universe, and of Him who made the universe? Yes, I profess to believe that every thing may be effected by that power; and, as to all other systems of education, I hold them (between ourselves) in utter contempt."

Lord de Montmorenci could not help loving the being who made him this confidence, and kissing her hand, he said, "Whoever may be disposed to cavil at your system, I am not one of them, and there must be every reason to believe that, brought up in such a school, Lady Herbert possesses all the attributes which constitute felicity in the marriage state."

Outward life is made up of petty details of minor interests, of the society of indifferent persons, of trivial incidents and accidents of physical and moral inconveniences, that when past by, it is impossible to recollect or to care about; but the inward life of the heart, that is indeed a world, where one day may be as a thousand, and a thousand as one day—where apparently slight occurrences leave traces that are never effaced, and where more is done to make or mar happiness in one hour, than is sometimes brought about in years.

Lady Herbert became a mother; the child was a girl. Lord Herbert swore at its not being a boy; but he said "Never mind, next time you'll give me an heir."

Lady Colebrooke scarcely lived a year after the birth of this daughter. It was christened Sarah, after her. She was her godmother, and left her her fortune. The infant was idolized by its mother. She pursued the same plan of education with her, which had been adopted to-

wards herself. Every thing she thought was to be wrought by the great agency of love.

In the course of Sarah Herbert's childhood, she feared sometimes that she was mistaken; but then again another view of the theory made her satisfied with its all-sufficiency. Her passion for her husband could not be said to have diminished; it rather strengthened with the advance in life; but it assumed a *somewhat* different shape. She checked in herself those girlish expectations of being worshipped, in which it was very pardonable when hardly sixteen, to indulge. She believed that women are made to suffer; that it is their portion in this life, and naturally pious (as pure and tender hearts generally are,) she cultivated a religious principle, and found its blessed efficacy; if she was less Lord Herbert's plaything, she became more his friend, and he frequently attended to the dignified wishes of the wife, which he had slighted in the petulant exuberations of the bride. Her education had been desultory, and defective, as it must have been, under the superintendence of her amiable but romantic aunt; and she now had the good sense to pursue that self-instruction, which sinks deepest of any, when resorted to as a means of happiness, and a hope of being of use to others.

The death of Lady Colebrook was the first deep grief that came with startling force to Lady Herbert's affections. Death, viewed abstractedly and individually, how different! The commonplaces uttered by common minds on the occasion, are wholly irrelevant to the subject. Who dares to touch a mourner's wounds?—the rash—the unthinking—the careless, write and speak those words of usage, those received axioms, which are written or spoken on similar events, varying the turn of the phrases, as may suit the circumstances of the afflicted, but all the same in fact; the words (for in their mouths they are mere words,) the words time, resignation, piety, strike without meaning on the ear of the wretched, and are discordant to the truly sorrowing. Of these consolations, Lady Herbert received cart-loads full on the death of her aunt; but those persons whom she was obliged to answer or to listen to, she quickly silenced, saying, that she felt too much to talk upon the subject, and to the world in general she shut her door.

It was nearly a year after the event, before she returned to the gay world again; and it was surprising to herself under what different aspects that world appeared to her.

Lord Herbert, instigated by Lord de Montmorenci,



had entered with considerable zest into public life; he had become a party man, and was proud of being of consequence, no matter on what plea, whether of adventitious circumstances, which cast merely a reflected lustre, or of those which were honourably achieved. But this interest had at least ennobled his life for the time being, and drawn him out of the slough of society in which he had been in danger of sinking altogether.

Lord de Montmorenci spent almost his whole time with the Herberts, and every day became more necessary to them. He had stood godfather to the infant Sarah; he was her guardian, also, and had been appointed sole executor to Lady Colebrook's will. He was considered by the parents as a brother, and loved them as such.

For sixteen years, which it must be remembered are now gone by, since Lady Herbert was a bride, she experienced no vicissitude, nothing occurred which could be called an event. In herself alone she was conscious of a change; many things, which in the first years of her marriage, she would have looked upon with abhorrence, such as the presence of Mr. Crookshanks and Miss Gregory, when she resided at Moreton Park, she now bore as a matter of course, and the affected pedantry of the one, and the simple dulness of the other were alike indifferent to her. Lord Herbert was, as he had ever been to her, and all that he could be to any woman, and very seldom was it that any brighter vision which she had indulged in her girlish days crossed her mind, or rendered her present life by comparison tasteless. She had, in short, taken her yoke up and bore it, courageously, meekly. Few persons gave her any credit for this, for the outward circumstances of her fate, all that the world could judge of, were highly prosperous, and as for the early disappointment of her heart, in the check of its young and aspiring feelings, few could understand what that was; one only person perhaps had read the secret, and with him it was a secret, which he would have thought it dishonourable to betray. During their sojourn at Moreton Park, in the year 18—, Mr. Crookshanks came one day at an unusual hour, and requested an audience of Lady Herbert in his own pompous way. She was so accustomed to the *loathly worm*, as she had once called him, that she no longer felt that repugnance to be in his presence, which would not have allowed her to go alone to the interview.

"See the morning star, day's harbinger, come dancing from the east," said Mr. Crookshanks, rising on his tiptoe,

and peering up in her face, with that most hideous leer which rendered deformity more deformed.

"Mr. Crookshanks, may I request no poetry at present; your message to see me was urgent, your business, you said, of importance. I pray you lose no time in declaring it to me, for I have only a few moments to spare."

"Madam, I shall obey your ladyship. Be it known to you that a family, distantly related to you through Lady Colebrook, is in the greatest distress."

He proceeded, with a few poetical parentheses, to detail a history of woe. The claimants were reduced from affluence to beggary, by a series of misfortunes in various mercantile speculations: the mother died of a broken heart, and the father, unable to bear his wretchedness, put a period to his existence. One son and one daughter, brought up in luxury, were reduced to absolute mendicacy. He, Mr. Crookshanks, had been employed as an amanuensis and accountant to Mr. Clermont, and witnessed scenes which he said would freeze her young blood, and make every hair to stand on an end, like "quills upon the fretful porcupine."

Notwithstanding the unavoidable temptation of interlarding this history with ill-timed quotations, Lady Herbert was moved to compassion, and finally sent for Miss Clermont and her brother, being resolved to take charge of them till such time as she could determine on some plan for their future and lasting welfare—the remotest link which connected any one with her aunt's memory, was a sufficient recommendation to Lady Herbert; and she received these orphans with a kindness which, if any thing could lessen misfortune such as theirs, was calculated to give relief. Miss Clermont was about four years older than her own daughter, precisely at that bud and bloom of existence when every thing, like the first green of spring, wears a charm that no late season can ever boast; but besides that bright and brief prerogative of youth, Anna Clermont was a creature formed to charm. Delicate and pale, at first sight she might have passed for a common-place-looking person; but hear her silver-toned voice, and you would look to see if it proceeded from an angel; and then looking again, the fine chiseling of the features, the curve of the lip, and the timid expression of the downcast eye riveted attention, and obtained the favour for which it appeared to sue. Her brother, a year older, was a midshipman, one of

the bravest youngsters in his Majesty's service, but down-hearted now, under the disgrace which had fallen upon his house. His countenance at the first glance told his character—he was as honest-hearted a sailor boy as ever stepped from stem to stern.

Lady Herbert soon made known to her husband the story of these young persons, and with his usual easiness of temper he permitted her to take charge of Miss Clermont, and promised to do all in his power to forward her brother's fortunes. If there is any thing which can give freshness to existence, it is the consciousness of being useful to others; not that vain, self-flattering patronage which idle people, who want to be of consequence, mistake for charity; but the quiet, unknown influence which exerts itself secretly in doing good, and whose reward is a reflection from the happiness of others; it was this motive which alone actuated Lady Herbert in her conduct to the Clermonts.

Frederick soon left Moreton to attend his duties at Portsmouth; and Miss Clermont endeavoured to rouse herself from her melancholy, in order to be agreeable to Miss Herbert, whose affections she readily won. Miss Clermont was a perfect musician, and took infinite pains in instructing Miss Herbert in an accomplishment to which her parents were particularly partial.

From time to time, Frederick Clermont returned to pass some weeks on shore. Lord Herbert always invited him to his house, and he made himself beloved by every member of the family. Thus did these two young persons become, as it were, next to their own child, dearer to them than any other living creatures.

The Herberts removed to town at their accustomed time, in the year 18—; and Lord Herbert formed a new intimacy with a Sir Charles Lennard, for whose society he testified a most decided preference. Lord de Montmorenci had been absent about a year, and Lady Herbert thought she had observed a great change in her husband's whole deportment, since his best and truest friend was gone. Nor did she at all like Sir Charles Lennard, who, although there was no positive fault to be found with him, inspired her with a repugnance which she vainly endeavoured to overcome. Handsome, young, of good manners, the fashion of the day, and the voice of the world was in his favour, but still something whispered to her from within (that

indescribable warning, which, in the course of a lifetime, every one has repented not having listened to)—“beware that man.” Once or twice she half expressed this feeling to her husband; but, when she did so, he showed such evident and unusual marks of ill humour, that she determined never again to hazard the experiment.

Lord Herbert dined out very frequently, and the theatres appeared to have unusual attractions for him; so that Lady Herbert found it difficult to obtain one hour of her husband’s society, and she said several times,

“Herbert, I wish the season for our return to dear Moreton Park was come again. I never see you *now*—.”

“Come, come,” he replied, with unusual asperity, “don’t begin acting the girl again. I thought you were ground down into a good sensible woman. We see quite enough of one another, depend upon it, for people who are tied together for life.”

Lady Herbert made no answer, but she looked earnestly in his countenance, and read an expression there which she had never seen it wear before. There are moments when, as if by a supernatural power, the book of futurity is placed before us, and we are permitted to read the page. Miserable privilege! who is so bold as dare to wish for it?

## CHAPTER IV.

### MARRIED LIFE.

Love not me for comely grace,  
For my pleasing eye or face,  
Nor for any actions past,  
No! nor for my constant heart:  
For these may fail or turn to ill,  
So thou and I shall sever.  
Keep, therefore, a true woman’s eye,  
And love me still, but know not why,  
So hast thou the same reason still  
To dote upon me ever.

FROM WILKES’S SECOND SET OF MADRIGALS.

ONE night Lady Herbert returned home earlier than she was expected by her domestics, from a ball at court. And

as she reached the door of her dressing-room, she thought she heard her husband's voice within in conversation with some other person. She paused and listened and was surprised, because he had told her, before she left St. James's, "that he was tired of the ball, and should escape with Sir Charles Lennard to Crockford's."

"Do not," he added, "hurry away, for I shall not be at home till very late."—

This speech was still sounding in her ears, when her husband's voice startled her. She turned the lock softly and moved forward; but, in doing so, she pushed against a piece of furniture, which fell with some violence to the ground. There was no light but what proceeded from the flickering of a nearly extinguished fire; but, by that gleam, she distinguished Lord Herbert seated in the farther part of the room, and at the same time she fancied she heard the rustling of a silk gown in an adjoining closet, which communicated with her husband's dressing-room.

"Francis, is it you?" she said in a breathless manner, going up to him, and touching his shoulder.

"Who did you suppose it was? Did you expect any other company?" he asked in a tone of affected jocularly; "if so you have only to inform me, I never wish to be *de trop*."

"If this is a joke, dear Francis, it is a foolish one, and one that I cannot taste. And if you are serious, I do not think I deserve to be so insulted."

"Insulted! Mabel. What childish nonsense. You are always on stilts. One can never jest with you now without undergoing a lecture. Believe me, lay aside these tragedy airs—smile as you used to do when we were in love, and remember, that if any thing can frighten away the loves and graces, reproaches and frowns are the most effectual means to do so. Come, brighten up, give me a kiss, Mabel, and don't be a fool."

"Francis, you know how I love you; you know it is always delightful for me to meet you; you know that the reference to the past which you just made, of 'when we were in love,' is as applicable to *me* now as it ever was in past times. Is there any being upon earth I care for in comparison of yourself, our child perhaps excepted, and even that love is but a branch of the affection I feel for you? But of late—"

"I am not up to learned disquisitions of any sort, Mabel,

and least of all to disquisitions upon love. I do not know what you are disputing about. I believe I have been as good a husband as most men; I am sure I have wished to make you happy, but you know after fourteen or fifteen years of matrimony, we cannot be young lovers: henceforth, we must be a sober married pair, jogging on under our yoke as best we may. I set you a good example; I never cross your wishes or habits, let me advise you not to cross mine."

"Ah! Francis, is there any thing you could desire me to do, in which I would not gladly obey you? It would be happiness to me to sacrifice any wish to your pleasure."

"My dear, good Mabel, I never doubted it; let us be happy, why should we not? And he kissed his wife's cheek and left her.

"Let us be happy, why should we not?" repeated Lady Herbert as she sank into the chair her husband had just left, and, covering her face with her hands, she burst into tears; for there was a conviction at her heart that she never should be happy again. Till of late, Lady Herbert had placed implicit confidence in her husband; hitherto, she had had no reason to doubt his affection—that sort of affection with which so many wives are obliged to content themselves, and which suffices to the wishes and understandings of so many more; a species of dead-letter sentiment that lies in abeyance like plate at the banker's, ready to be called out upon great occasions, but which never makes its appearance in those every-day scenes, those minor attentions and sweetnesss where, nevertheless, domestic life plays its chief part.

Lady Herbert had married for love, and what was more rare still, had lived for love. She was of a happy, sunny disposition, naturally; she had cherished illusions, as other persons cherish reality. She had made herself believe that she was loved even as she loved, for years after any one else would have discovered their mistake; but she gave the reflection of that passion to the object with which she fancied she inspired him; and, till an incipient jealousy took possession of her, her eyes were never completely opened.

Various circumstances had awakened that wretched vigilance which seeks to know what, when known, makes its misfortune; and now the rustling of the silk gown, which rung in her ears, like a knell, foreboding evil! seemed to her a confirmation of her fears. Who could Lord Herbert have been in conversation with? Or how came he to enter

into discourse with her waiting-maid? She rung her bell violently, and then blushed that she had done so.

"Martha," she asked, "when did Lord Herbert come home?"

"My lord came home about half an hour before your ladyship, and, as he sent word to the servants that your ladyship would not return till late, said all the servants, except his lordship's man, might go to bed; that is the reason the candles were not lit, and that your ladyship found nothing comfortable."

"I wonder why he thought I should stay late?" said Lady Herbert, speaking, unconscious that she was speaking; and then, touching her maid's gown, she said quickly, "What a pretty silk gown! Who gave it you?"

"Why who, to be sure, but your ladyship's ladyship! Don't you remember? On Miss Herbert's last birthday, when she completed her fifteenth year, now very near six months ago; it was then, you know, you gave us all something. Bless me, how time flies! Why, I declare there is Miss Herbert quite a woman in another year! Your ladyship will be presenting her at court, for she is a full-grown young lady, of her years, and not as some are, who don't come to their beauty till late in their spring."

Lady Herbert had heard little of all this speech; for the rustling of the silk gown was the circumstance that took precedence of every other—she could not bear her maid's presence. She fancied she was officiously attentive in undressing her, and ascribed to her discourse an unusually hurried volubility, which she fancied was assumed, to conceal some secret.

"When did Sarah go to bed?" asked Lady Herbert, abruptly.

"Just as your ladyship went out, at her accustomed hour. She put up her doves, as usual, in their cage, and Miss Clermont carried them up stairs for her."

"Was she quite well, Martha? Are you sure she was quite well?"

"Bless me! my lady, yes! Why your ladyship is so flurried like, to-night, I am afeard you are not well, or perhaps you have heard some bad news like, to disturb you, for you are not like yourself."

"What do you mean, Martha? I have heard no bad news—I am not flurried; quite the contrary, only sleepy. Leave me, I wish to go to bed, I do not want you any more."

But Martha, so unaccustomed to this rough dismissal, lingered about the room, found a thousand things to do, and obeyed not.

"I told you, Martha, I wish to be alone. Leave the room."

"I wish your ladyship a very good night;" and she departed, wondering.—

Lady Herbert repeated to herself the "very good night." She fancied the words were uttered in mockery. What is there that jealousy does not fancy? to what meanness does it not subdue the noblest minds of which it takes possession.

The next day Lord Herbert was all smiles and good-humour; he spoke kindly to his wife, and fondly to his child; told the latter that "he had taken a box at one of the theatres for her and her mamma, that night, and if he could not accompany them, Lord de Montmorenci would; and," he added, "Miss Clermont, there is a place for you also, for the box is very large.—Mabel, you like a play; to-night is the new play, which all the world are mad about, so I hope you will be amused."

"If you will come with us, Francis, I am sure to be so; and," she whispered, "nothing is quite delightful to me without your presence."

"I'll come if I can,—I am not sure."

Lady Herbert shrank within herself.—She thought, *I could not have answered him so.*"

At that moment, Lord de Montmorenci entered. He was so much one of the family, that Lady Herbert scarcely bowed as he came into the room; but Miss Herbert ran up to him, and said, "Papa has taken a box for us to-night at the theatre, I hope you will come, too, and take care of us."

"With the greatest pleasure," he answered; if Lady Herbert will allow me."

"Oh, I shall be very glad!" she said, not caring about the matter.

Lord de Montmorenci looked rather graver than usual, but no one, except Miss Herbert, observed it.

"I must leave you at present," said Lord Herbert. "I have an engagement to choose a pair of horses for Lumley, who knows just as much about a horse as you do, Mabel, and they will cheat the unfortunate fellow if I do not keep a sharp look-out.—Good bye—don't spoil Sarah quite. Miss Clermont, don't let Mabel spoil her."



"Lady Herbert never can do any thing but what is right, my lord," replied the latter; and, at all events, I am the last person to think otherwise."

"Well, De Montmorenci, I have no hope, I see, of having Sarah taken care of, unless you become her mentor."

"I am very unfit for that office; besides, I do not scruple to say, I should always spoil every person, and every thing I love, I am sure there is much more harm done by severity than is ever done by indulgence."

"So, you are all in league against me, I see; therefore manage every thing your own way."

He opened the door to go out, and then, as if suddenly recollecting something, he returned, and whispered in Miss Clermont's ear.

"Remember, Francis, I shall expect you," said Lady Herbert, "to-night; do not disappoint me." But he was gone.

Lady Herbert approached Miss Clermont, and the latter said, "How attentive Lord Herbert is! I never thought that men could busy themselves with such minute things. Do you know what he whispered to me as he went out?—'Remember, Miss Clermont,' he said, 'for I am sure Mabel won't, to take all their fur cloaks to the theatre, and see that Martha puts the *chaufe pieds* into the carriage.'"

"Dear Francis!" said Lady Herbert. "He is the best husband in the world."

And she thought so at the moment—a ray of the old illusion returned to cheer her.

Lord de Montmorenci was so intimate in the house, and had been so for the last sixteen years, that Lady Herbert considered him as a brother. He was about five-and-thirty, some three or four years older than herself. For her daughter, therefore, she had nothing to fear, on his account. He might have been *her* father, but for that circumstance (disparity of years,) his character, his rank, his fortune, would have rendered him a desirable alliance. Under these circumstances, he was as often left alone with Sarah Herbert as with any other member of the family, and he took a particular interest in all her occupations and studies, frequently recommending books for her perusal which were of a graver cast than young persons generally like; yet she devoured them with the avidity which others would wrks of fiction. She was altogether a singular creature; wild as the winds, sometimes—at others, of a reflective turn of

mind, unusual at her years. Her mother's love for her was passing the love of mothers—it was a species of idolatry; but it might be accounted for, by resolving the passionate love she bore her husband into the maternal affection she felt for her daughter, thus making these objects to her, one, and indivisible. In fine, Sarah was *his* daughter—it was more that, even than being her own, which fashioned the tie that bound her to her child.

The play was one of unusual interest; it had less of the melo-drama,—more of the drama of life, than is generally seen in these times on the stage. The subject turned upon jealousy—the wife's jealousy and the catastrophe were made to hinge upon the danger and ultimate ruin which that passion brought about.

When the play commenced, Lady Herbert was inattentive to the progress of the scene; her eyes continually turned to the box-door. She started, and changed colour at every footstep that passed by; and the sickening feeling of “hope deferred” made her heart chill, and her cheek pale, as her husband came not.

“Shall I go and look for Herbert?” asked Lord de Montmorenci.

“Perhaps it is better not,” she replied.

“If your anxiety can be allayed, it is better. *Yes—do—do—let me go in quest of him.*”

“Oh, no—he would be angry!”

This little colloquy passed in a whisper. Lord de Montmorenci's face was close to hers.

“How that woman does go on!” said a party in an opposite box. “Was there ever any thing so barefaced—at least, people in general pay some regard to appearances—but really!—Well! I am surprised how Lord Herbert allows himself to be made such a fool of!”

“Dear,” said another speaker, “he does not care what she does. You know he has fifty engagements on his own hands; he could not, if he would, find fault. Besides he plays—I mean gambles—so that his time is fully occupied. Some people say that in spite of all his contrivances to win money, and to make money, he will be ruined at last.”

“What do you mean by contrivances? Does he cheat?”

“No, no, that would not exactly do; but something very like it. He chooses horses for other men, and sells them dogs, which he breeds himself, and gives advice as to betting

transactions, all which he turns to his own account; but it won't do. He cannot afford to go on much longer."

"Phoo! I wonder you do not see that he has an inexhaustible resource in his friend, de Montmorenci, who is immensely rich, and will always keep his head above water, so long as he is in love with his wife."

"I do not believe a word of all you have been saying," said a person who had never yet spoken. "Lord Herbert may be a little wild; he may even gamble, but not to that extent which you have said. As to Lady Herbert, I know she loves her husband, and would sooner die than forsake him."

"What a knight errant!" exclaimed one.

"What an innocent!" cried another. "Are you ready to break a lance in the defence of the lady?"

"Yes, or a head either," said the latter speaker, and left the box.

"Who is that young sea-calf?" said one of the party, when he went out.

"That is Lieutenant Clermont, who did such a brave thing the other day—saved his captain's life off Spithead, when the ship was running before the wind. Somehow the captain, like a lubberly fellow, got himself entangled in a rope, and was hoisted off into the deep; when the young midshipman, Frederick Clermont, who was at the moment up aloft, and saw the accident, rushed down with the rapidity of lightning, and, without waiting to strip, threw off his jacket, plunged into the sea, and supported the drowning man till a boat came to their relief. He has been promoted since, and is as fine a young fellow as ever plucked a laurel from fame."

"But who is he? Of what family?"

"Not of any body one knows. His sister is a sort of humble companion or protégée of Lady Herbert's—very beautiful, and very accomplished; and he has always been kindly received by the Herberts in consequence; so that he has lived from a boy in the best society, and is by no means the sea-calf you called him. He owes every thing to the Herberts, and that is the reason he defended Lady Herbert when you accused her of flirting."

"Oh, very true—yes—that accounts for his Quixotism."

Frederick Clermont had passed into Lady Herbert's box, and Lord de Montmorenci, who was sitting by Miss Herbert, offered him his place in the front seat, saying,

"You will see better, Clermont, here; and I do not care about seeing."

"No, do not," said Miss Herbert, "do not move;" and she touched Lord de Montmorenci's elbow, but he either did not, or would not, hear her; and, jumping up, beckoned to Mr. Clermont, who availed himself of the offer, and he then took a vacant place behind Lady Herbert, whose attention was now riveted to the stage.

As the piece proceeded, she had become more and more interested in it, and at length the *denouement* touched her feelings so nearly, that she could not control her tears, and though she stifled her sobs in her handkerchief, they were all noted by Lord de Montmorenci.

"I think," he said, in a low tone, "this is too harrowing a subject to be treated dramatically; there are but too many causes for sorrow. On the whole, I am averse to the representation of real life on the stage. When one is *very* young, one feels as if being excited, even to *painful* sentiments, was a gratification; but I am quite old enough to dread having my feelings or those of my friends aroused uselessly. I shall always hate this play: it has cost *you* so many tears."

"It is very foolish," Lady Herbert replied, "to allow oneself thus to be cheated by a fable; but is not life itself a fable? How few things in it are real. Yet we laugh and weep: this is an episode in real life, it moves me to tears it is true, but I can laugh, too, at a comedy. So that existence is made up of tears and smiles, whether in real or in factitious scenes, and, doubtless, we have our quota of feeling which must be expended; no matter, therefore, *how*, providing it be innocently."

"Oh yes, it matters exceedingly; I cannot bear to see you weep."

Miss Herbert addressed some words to Lord de Montmorenci, that he was obliged to answer, and her father, at that moment entering the box, the former made room for him by attempting to leave it.

"If you stir, de Montmorenci, I will not come in."

"Francis, there is quite room enough for us all. Do come in, I beseech you," said his wife.

"So I will when de Montmorenci sits down quietly in his place;" and the latter was obliged to resume his seat.

Lord Herbert spoke to his child, to Frederick Clermont, and his sister, and placed himself between the two

latter. Lady Herbert made several observations to draw him into conversation; but he answered briefly though good-humouredly, and then turned again to talk to Miss Clermont or his child. Lady Herbert sighed, leaned back, and was silent.

"I am so very much distressed," whispered Lord de Montmorenci, "to be where I am. You cannot conceive how much I wish myself away; but I am afraid of offending Herbert, and yet if I remain I offend *you*."

"Oh no, you cannot offend me. It is true I wanted to speak to Francis, but he is more amused talking to Sarah: it is natural, she is young and gay; she is his child. And again tears rolled in Lady Herbert's eyes. Lord de Montmorenci remained silent during the rest of the performance, and, when the curtain dropped, said he would call the carriage, and left the box. The box-keeper announced its being in readiness.

"What is become of Montmorenci, I wonder! he is generally at his post," said Lord Herbert; "but I believe we can do without him. Clermont, take care of Lady Herbert," and, hurrying on Miss Herbert's cloak, he took her under one arm and Miss Clermont under the other, and, making way for his wife to pass, followed her to the carriage.

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## CHAPTER V.

### WINTER IN LONDON.

But through the heart  
Should jealousy its venom once diffuse,  
'Tis then delightful misery no more;  
But agony unmix'd, incessant gall,  
Corroding every thought, and blasting all  
Love's paradise.

THOMSON'S "SPRING."

EVERY one who is detained in London during the foggy months of November and December, knows how the spirits droop under the gloom of that trying season. The sun is never seen but clothed in a dim red garment, or like a

brazen ball struggling in vain to shine through the impenetrable atmosphere; and this particular year, in which the Herberts were fixtures in town, the weather seemed more than usually melancholy, at least Lady Herbert thought so.

The cheerless season was set in; the park contained nothing but damp vapours from the Serpentine and the reservoir, and the tracks across it in various directions made by foot-passengers, were visible, and the grass was withered, and the general appearance of the wide arena, desolate. The only objects that were now to be seen in it, were the miserable flys, those poverty-stricken apologies for carriages, and other wretched vehicles of the same kind, parading their misery about boldly, as if "London was their own;" and a few children with blue faces and red noses, sent out with nursery-maids, who too often haul the half-frozen creatures along by one arm, or give them a thump to drive them forwards, while the cruel system of making them hardy as it is called (with the chance of killing them in the process,) continues to be practised with unmitigated severity, all out of love, nevertheless. Oh, love! love! how is the word in all its various meanings abused! So thought Lady Herbert as she walked, for her daughter's sake, to and fro in the now deserted park. Miss Herbert was gaily stepping along, playing with her favourite dog, and happily in ignorance of her mother's cause for sorrow, while the latter was so intently musing on sad thoughts, that she almost ran against Lord de Montmorenci before she perceived him.

"So Lady Herbert," he said, "you were going to pass by without acknowledging me; but I cannot allow you to do that; permit me to offer you my arm, which you will not refuse when I tell you I have this instant met Herbert, who desired me to request you would join him in S——'s nursery-garden."

Lady Herbert's eyes glistened with pleasure as she readily accepted the offered arm which was to conduct her to her husband; and Miss Herbert taking the other, they walked merrily on till they reached the garden; but not finding Lord Herbert, Lady Herbert looked reproachfully at her conductor, and said, "I hope you were not joking?"

"Joking! Lady Herbert, how could you suppose I would ever do so on such a subject? I am sure Herbert will soon be here."

"Do you really think so? Then let us wait."

Miss Herbert amused herself gathering the last blossoms

of uncropped flowers; and Lady Herbert asked her companion if he knew what had induced her husband to remain in town at a time when he used always to be at his country-house, a *séjour* so much more desirable for his interest than the present.

This was the first time Lady Herbert had ever made a remark about her husband to a *third* person. She spoke as it were unconsciously—had she reflected, she would not have done so. There is nothing more dangerous than for a married woman to speak of her husband to any one; if she praises him, it is like praising *herself*, and the testimony she gives of his merits is never believed, or else excites envy. If she complains of him, she opens the door to a thousand attacks upon her heart, which, however courageously repelled, are sure, sooner or later, to leave scars upon her own.

Lord de Montmorenci replied, "I do not know, but I am certain Lord Herbert has some good reason for your departure from town, and I conclude you will go to Moreton Park at Christmas.

"Did you hear Herbert name any time for going there?"

"Yes, he mentioned the other day that he intended to go soon to the country."

"How happy I shall be if he keeps his resolution! But here he is;" and seeing him enter the garden, she hastened to meet him.

"Mabel," he said, taking her hand and passing it through his arm, "it is very kind of you to come to this dull garden; but I was anxious to look for some particular species of pine-trees, which I want to send down to Moreton, and to have your opinion concerning them."

"No place," she whispered, is dull to me where you are."

"You are always kind, always gentle, dear Mabel," and he pressed her towards him as they walked along.

Lady Herbert thought, "Ah! this is something like love; if it could only last, how happy I should be!" And then, too, the remembrance of her unfounded jealousy made her blush for herself, and she promised inwardly that she never would indulge such a sentiment again.

Lord de Montmorenci walked by Miss Herbert, and she arranged a nosegay of the flowers she had been gathering, tore away a riband from her cap, and tying it round the flower stalks, presented it to him, desiring him to wear it

every day, and put it in water every night, till it was quite dead; "then," she said, "you shall have another. I will be your flower-merchant."

"Dear Miss Herbert, how kind you are! It is I who ought to have found some flowers for you; but, indeed, I did not think there was any worthy of your acceptance."

"Indeed you did not think any such thing. The fact is, you were not thinking of me at all."

"How do you know that, Miss Herbert?"

"Oh! I know it without being told so; but, besides, Miss Clermont says you never think of any body but one person, and that person you can never marry."

"I am surprised, Miss Herbert, that your friend should busy herself so much about me; and still more astonished that she should make me her subject of conversation to you."

"Well, but your surprise does not lessen the truth of the fact. You are in love, Lord de Montmorenci, and have not placed your affections happily. I am sure that is true, for you look so often miserable. Now do make me your confidant; you cannot imagine how well I can keep a secret. I assure you I can; so you need not look so incredulous."

"I dare say you could keep a secret; but if I had any, especially of the nature you suppose, I should not think of confiding them to you, Miss Herbert. What would your papa and mamma say were I to be so indiscreet?"

"They would not care. Papa, you know, cares for nothing but diverting himself; and mamma is never angry with any one, far less with me. So do *tell* me your secret?"

"I have no secret, Miss Herbert; none, I can assure you."

"Well, well; you may suppose I am child enough to believe you, but you are quite mistaken. I know what Miss Clermont thinks, and I will never rest till I find it out."

Lord de Montmorenci felt relieved when Lord Herbert called to him and said,

"Mabel and I have determined to go to Moreton Park next Monday. I hope you can accompany us, or at least follow us there immediately?"

"Why, I think I had better break up my establishment, sell my house, and live in yours, Herbert, altogether. I am never any where but in your house."



"So much the better. I do not know what I could do without you."

"It is very flattering to me that you should tell me so; but you know it has been said by the highest authority, 'Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house, lest he be weary of thee, and so hate thee;' and sometimes I tremble for fear this should be my case."

"Never, as far as regards me; so you will come with us, De Montmorenci."

"Oh! yes, pray do?" said Miss Herbert.

"But," he replied, "there is one person who has not yet honoured me with an invitation;" and he looked at Lady Herbert.

"Mabel, why do you not answer for yourself?" Lord Herbert asked; and she replied, "Lord de Montmorenci has known me long enough to be aware that I always wish for the society of *your* friends."

He bowed, and remained silent; but Miss Herbert, with the tenacity of childhood—for she was still a child in ingenuous simplicity—said to her mother,

"That will not do, mamma. Don't you know he is very particular? He will not be satisfied, unless you invite him as a friend of *your* own."

"Nonsense! Sarah. Lord de Montmorenci knows that it will add much to my pleasure to see him at Moreton Park; and I shall take it as a personal slight if he does not come."

"Certainly," he replied, "I would rather incur any penalty than that."

"Oh! what a merry Christmas we shall have!" said Miss Herbert, flying about like a gossamer. "Do let us go home now, that I may tell Anna; and papa, you will invite her brother? Poor Frederick, how glad he will be!"

"Yes, love, any thing you choose; every body you like shall be invited."

## CHAPTER VI.

## TRUST BETRAYED.

I believe you too kind for one moment to grieve me,  
 Or plant in a heart which adores you such wo;  
 Yet should you dishonour my trust and deceive me,  
 Should I e'er cease to love you? Oh no, my love, no!

M. G. LEWIS.

THE hope Lady Herbert had entertained of going to Moreton Park, was totally put an end to the next day. Her husband came to her evidently much agitated; told her, in confidence, that a person to whom he had lent a large sum of money, was ruined, and it was feared that he would never repay either that or other sums which he had levied on other persons, living in the same circle. "Poor Lennard," he said, is a severe sufferer; I know not what he will do in his present dilemma. His estate will, in the end, cover his losses, but in the mean while I fear he will be obliged to apply to his uncle, Lord D——, and that will, perhaps, make a quarrel between them. Had it not been for my folly, in having at various times advanced this rascal large sums, I could have given Lennard the five thousand pounds he wants, and saved him from the risk of displeasing his uncle; but, as it is, I am quite at a loss how to assist him. I have a great dislike to going to any of the brokers or money-lenders, and yet, rather than see my friend in such distress, I have almost made up my mind to do so. What would you advise me to do, Mabel?"

Lady Herbert thought a moment, and then said, while her eyes sparkled with delight at the thought of having it in her power to please her husband.

"Do you not think the diamonds my aunt left me would procure a part of that sum?"

"How kind of you, love, to propose such a sacrifice! but really I have a scruple in allowing you to contemplate such a piece of Quixotism. Were it for your husband, Mabel, it would be unusually noble; but for your husband's friend—no, I cannot think of allowing you to do such an act of un-

heard of munificence. Oh, no! I would rather see Lennard in a jail, than suffer you, love, to despoil yourself of your jewels."

"Not so, not so, Francis; after all, what pleasure can these diamonds ever afford me, in comparison with that of giving you one moment's gratification? Besides, I look upon this affair as a temporary accommodation. Sir Charles Lennard will repay you the loan, and you can easily replace the diamonds. After all, one diamond is as good as another; and if I had none, I should just be as happy. See, Herbert, perhaps you have forgotten the jewels; they are of great value;" and, going to a cabinet, which she unlocked, she took out a small casket and displayed them upon the table. "There is only one jewel amongst them which I should like to preserve; it is this ruby heart. Annexed to it is a legendary superstition, which has been handed down in my mother's family for many generations; which is, that whoever parts with it voluntarily, will have their own heart broken. It is foolish to attach any serious belief to this tradition, but I have a dislike to part with it, and perhaps the rest of the gems may procure the sum you want."

"Dear, generous Mabel, I accept your noble offer, although with reluctance; and I promise you, in a year to cover you with diamonds, in token of my sense of your present kindness. As to the ruby heart—let me look at it. What a little fool you are to attach any superstitious feeling to its possession! Why, it is not worth half what any one of the other diamonds is (looking at an examining it,) and yet do you know I would rather have this heart than all the rest."

"You, you would rather have it! What for? Who for? If for yourself, it is as though I myself wore it; but, for another person, or merely to barter it for gold—no, dear Francis, you are joking."

"Nay, but I am not joking, Mabel. Do you know, the very circumstance you have named to me, would, of itself, foolish and fanciful as it is, render it of great value. Come, give it me, Mabel," and he drew her towards him, and kissed her fondly. "You know I always loved to obtain any thing which was refused to me. So, Mabel, sweet, give me the ruby heart."

"If you will swear to wear it on your person by night and by day," she said, half in play, half in earnest, "and

show it to me once in the four-and-twenty hours, you shall have it, for then that will fix you ever near me—no more absences—no more partings—where you go, I must go—and where you reside, there I must reside, also.”

“Nonsense, Mabel, give me the heart without any bargaining—do not be such a Jew.”

“Ay, but I will though bargain: for I believe there is a virtue in the stone—it is that, I wish to retain. To *you* Francis, I will *give* the gem, but not barter it for gold.”

“This silly obstinacy about such a trifle, Mabel, is ridiculous,” said Lord Herbert with asperity; “nay, worse, it is rebellious—it savours of that love of power and command which you have often disguised under a pretence of sentiment; but I am inclined to say with Charles, in the *Rivals*, ‘D—n such sentiments;’” and, scrambling up the diamonds, he thrust them into his pocket, and went out of the room angrily.

Lady Herbert’s eyes followed him, and were riveted on the door through which he had passed for some moments after he was gone, till at last they filled with tears, and she thought “I might as well have given him this heart, for mine is already broken.” Certain it is, that though the great events of existence astound or overwhelm us, it is the minute occurrences of daily life which make up the sum of human things, and write us down as miserable, or happy.

Before Lady Herbert had time to compose herself, Lord de Montmorenci came into the room. She endeavoured to assume a cheerful air, to speak in a gay tone of voice, and complained of the glare of light which fell on her favourite Carracci landscape.

“Do have the kindness to lower that blind—there, that will do!”

Lord de Montmorenci having obeyed, approached her, and at one glance he knew that she had been undergoing some scene of violence from her husband. He pretended, however, not to be aware of the cause of her tears, and only asked at what hour they were to leave town for Moreton Park.

“We are not going there,” said Lady Herbert. “I am sure I may tell *you* why our plans are changed. You know poor Sir Charles Lennard is in the greatest pecuniary difficulties, and Herbert cannot bear to leave him at this moment.”

"I did hear that Sir Charles had lost some heavy sums, but I should hope his difficulties can only be temporary: as yet he has not entered deep enough into the vice of gaming to do more than to place him in a momentary dilemma, though what he, or any man, may do who once gives himself up to the snare, is incalculable: but I cannot see why Herbert should feel himself obliged to remain in town on this account."

"Oh! you know he is so generous, he will procure Sir Charles the money he wants, cost what it may."

Lord de Montmorenci looked grave, and then with a forced smile added, "Oh! you know, in my quality of guardian, I must stay in town too, then, and watch over my ward; but Herbert has not said a word to me of the matter."

"Then," rejoined Lady Herbert, colouring, and repenting that she had mentioned the subject; "promise me you will not speak of this business to him till such time as he voluntarily mentions it to you; I beseech you, Lord de Montmorenci, promise me," and she laid her hand on his arm.

"Oh! do not beseech me any thing," he said shuddering; and then resuming his grave and measured manner, he added: "for Herbert's sake, as well as yours, you know you have only to express your wishes, and, if in my power to grant them, they are granted." Then, as if to turn the conversation, he went on to say, "I regret that you are not going to pass your Christmas at Moreton Park, for I know you wished to do so; and it is of such consequence not to loosen the tie between the landholder and the tenant that I lament when any thing occurs to make too long an absence between them."

"Oh! yes," replied Lady Herbert, "we grow factitious by living always in town, and we seem to find our best-loved objects of affection more intensely ours in the country—it appears as if Herbert was totally changed—and—"

But Lady Herbert felt as if she had uttered something criminal, in thus speaking of her husband, even to his particular friend; and she asked some questions wholly irrelevant to the theme they had entered upon. It is a great point, it is a fearful point in intimacy, when a wife allows herself to discuss her husband's character, tastes, life, manners, with any other human being.

Lord de Montmorenci felt that she was right in changing

the conversation, and he hastened to reply to some remark she made on Miss Clermont.

"I grow fonder of that amiable girl every day; for every day I discover some new trait of worth in her character. The interest, nay, almost motherly charge she takes of her brother's conduct when he is on shore, does her infinite honour; and I know she saves up every little present that is made to herself, to give to him. Her attention to Sarah, also, is beyond all praise: the manner in which she has brought her on in music is surprising, and then she is so quiet, so unobtrusive, one should never find out she had talents if they did not betray themselves."

"Miss Clermont would be the most ungrateful of beings, Lady Herbert, if she did not devote herself to you."

Lord de Montmorenci was prevented from saying more, by her entering into the room with Miss Herbert.

"Oh, mamma," said the latter, "I am so vexed; I hear we are not going into the country after all. How provoking! It is too bad of papa to change his mind so often. If he had not promised us, I should not have been so disappointed; but I had got every thing ready, and my new riding-habit and—"

"Hush, love," said Lady Herbert, "never murmur, especially not at your papa's will. The new habit you can wear here; and I am sure Lord de Montmorenci will sometimes be glad to escort you in your rides."

"He is very good; I shall like that very well, but not so well as if we had had some nice long rides together all over the country."

"Oh! Miss Herbert," observed Miss Clermont, "you will like riding about Norwood or Hampstead just as well. One place is the same to you as another, so long as you have those you love best around you; and, indeed, that is the true secret of all happiness: the locale is a secondary consideration."

She raised her eyes in a very peculiar manner to Lord de Montmorenci, as she pronounced these words; so much so, that even Lady Herbert thought, "I wonder what she can mean?" And there was a half-formed idea crossed her mind, which frequently returned afterwards, and made her fancy that Miss Clermont had allowed her heart to feel more for Lord de Montmorenci than her station warranted.

Other visitors came in; among them, Sir Charles Lennard,

who appeared to be in his usual state of apathy and indifference, which, considering what Lord Herbert had told her of his distress, she could not reconcile with his situation. He asked Lady Herbert when she was going to Moreton Park, and seemed rather astonished, at her informing him that Lord Herbert had changed his mind, and would not leave London.

"What an unaccountable fancy!" he exclaimed; "fortunate, however, for those who have the honour of your acquaintance," and who remain in town.

"Surely, Sir Charles, you must be aware of the reason of the change in Herbert's plans?"

"Not I, upon my honour! This is the first intimation I have had of it; though I rejoice at the circumstance, I am totally ignorant of the motive."

Lady Herbert thought, "This is very strange!" nay, she almost doubted its being true. There was *untruth* somewhere; she had rather believe it existed any where than with her husband.

That evening, Lady Herbert was alone. She sat up long after her child and the rest of the household were gone to bed, and she wondered (for still the habit of wondering at Lord Herbert's irregular habits held sway over her) that he had not come home. A loud rap, and then a quick ring at the bell, made her start from her chair. She opened her chamber-door and listened, thinking to hear his voice; but the street-door was shut too quickly, and her maid brought her a letter, which she said had been just left, with strict injunctions to give it into her own hands. She took the letter breathlessly—its form and size and seal were unknown to her. She opened it carelessly, disappointed as she was at the knock not having ushered in her husband, and read the following words:

"Madam—The world is not blind, whatever you may be. It has long pitied you, as an injured and yet forbearing wife; but the few individuals, who have the honour and delight of forming your more intimate society, have done more than pitied you. I myself, for one, have esteemed and honoured you; and I sympathize with you under all the trials you have so nobly borne. I am not the acquaintance of yesterday. I watched your rising splendour—I mourn your setting light; but I foresaw, at the time of your marriage, from what I knew of Lord Herbert's life and habits, that your fate would be such as I believe it is. You

loved him with that devoted and youthful love, which bore the true characteristic of the passion—total blindness to the real character of the object; but this love was not returned. How could it be so by such a man? Nevertheless, you expected not only the same degree of return, but the same *kind* of return; and of course you were bitterly disappointed. Lady, I know this to be the case, though you have never said it to human being. Well, time passed on; you loved as much as ever; and you hoped to gather figs of thistles. Every one of Lord Herbert's pursuits was different from yours. He loved hunting; you thought it an ignoble pursuit. He loved sitting late after dinner with low companions; you deemed it the custom of boors. He loved drinking, loved coarse songs and jests. He was famed for his knowledge of horses and dogs, bred them, trafficked in them; you despised such knowledge, you abhorred such dealings. He loved buffoons and toadies—to be the cock of the company, in vulgar phraseology; you could not endure such society, such debasing amusements. In what, then, which constitutes companionship, friendship, honoured and honouring reciprocity of principle or of taste, did you agree? In nothing; and, in despite of all the wiles of love to avoid a discovery of the truth, you were soon acquainted with it. That knowledge made your existence ever after a blank; but, having schooled yourself to descend to that miserable portion of commonplace happiness, for which *you* were never designed—how are you rewarded? Lady Herbert, look warily around you, or you will soon be ruined in fortune, as well as blasted in felicity.

“A sincere Friend.”

“Anonymous,” said Lady Herbert, crumpling the letter in her hand; and she was about to tear it to pieces. “The assassin is not worse than the writer of an anonymous letter.” So she said, and so she felt; but she determined to *show* it to Lord Herbert, as though to prove to herself that it was without any power to wound her, and wholly untrue. But, again she read it, and, after a second perusal, she found her heart chilled to stone.

“Most mischievous; most diabolical informer!” she said. “If I know these things, why repeat them to me? Why show me that others read my secret thoughts? Why warn me, when warning comes too late? and, if I am ignorant of them, let me ever remain so. Oh! this stabbing in the dark! either way it is only that. What is it but malignity?”



And why should I torment and offend my husband, by making him aware that such things are thought and said? No—no. I will consume the hateful paper. And yet it would be something, could I discover the writer.” Again she examined the handwriting; she thought she recognised having seen it before; it was like—yes, it was like Lord de Montmorenci’s; but, if he was malignant, who could be noble, kind, worthy? No, it could not be he. Why was the character of the letters formed so like his, only written evidently with disguise? The seal, too, was remarkable—finely cut; the design was from the fable of the dog seizing the shadow and leaving the substance. She gazed at this, and thought of the contents of the page till her senses became bewildered, and she could come to no resolution respecting it: so that, locking it in her *escrutoire*, she left it to after consideration to determine, whether to show it to her husband or not.

This night Lord Herbert did not come home, and, when Lady Herbert rose the next day, she was so pale and exhausted, that her daughter observed,

“Dear mamma, if we do not go out of town, and change the air, you will have some serious illness.”

Lady Herbert endeavoured to laugh at Sarah’s having become a physician, and tried to turn away her suspicions; but her child was no longer a child,—she read too plainly the secret of her mother’s unhappiness.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE RUBY HEART.

Believe not oaths, nor much protesting men:  
 Credit no vows, nor a bewailing song;  
 Let courtiers swear, forswear, and swear again:  
 The heart doth live ten regions from the tongue;  
 And when with oaths and vows they make you tremble,  
 Believe them least! for then, they most dissemble.

JOSHUA SYLVESTER.

"I WONDER," said Miss Herbert, one day to her companion, "why papa vexes mamma so!"

"What do you mean?" rejoined Miss Clermont. "Vex your mamma! I never saw a more attentive husband."

"I don't know what you call attentive, Anna; but if I were married, and my husband constantly slept out of my house, I should be horrid angry."

"Nonsense, Miss Herbert, you are discussing points that you cannot know any thing about. What can a girl of fifteen know of the duties or feelings of married persons?"

"I know what I should like, and what I should expect of my husband, and I am sure poor dear mamma is not happy."

"I could not allow myself, Miss Herbert, to listen one moment to such conversation, were it not that I know your imprudence; and if you do not unburden your imagination to me, it will vent itself on less safe persons. I hope you will not indulge in such foolish fancies, and, above all, I trust you will not impart them to others."

"Miss Clermont, I cannot be blinded like a child any longer. My firm conviction is, (and yet I cannot give you any reason why it is so,) that there is some person or other who papa likes far better than mamma, and to deck that person in finery, and give them money, he robs *her*."

"I must insist, Miss Herbert, in hearing no more on this subject: you know my obligation to both of your parents, and, whatever *you* may imagine, it is my duty never to per-

mit any one, not even yourself, to lessen the love and respect I bear either of them."

"Anna, when people cease to respect themselves, they will not be respected by others. You are talking to me as though I were still an infant, and as you think you are bound to do; but, it would be far more natural, and more kind, if you entered into my feelings, and felt for the one of my parents who most requires commiseration, I tell you that papa has robbed mamma of all the diamonds my aunt left her. I know it, because I wanted to wear some of them, and took mamma's keys, (she always allows me to do so,) and when I went to the cabinet, I found the casket in which they had hitherto been kept, but not *one* single jewel. I ran to mamma, and told her what I had discovered; she bade me hold my tongue, and not be inquisitive, and spoke more severely than she had ever done before. I ventured to say to her—'Well, dearest mamma, it was very wrong in me to open the casket without telling you, but surely when I had done so, and found the jewels missing, it was right in me to tell you the fact. It is not that I care so much about wearing the diamonds, but I was surprised to find them gone: why not even the ruby heart, which I know you prized so much, is left!' At this last intelligence, mamma turned pale, and spoke hurriedly and breathlessly.

"'You are mistaken, Sarah,' she said, 'the ruby heart is there.'

"'No, indeed it is not.' Mamma rose, went to the cabinet, examined the secret drawers and found it not. 'Surely,' I said, 'you will have all the servants searched?'

"'No, Sarah, no; why should I cast suspicion upon persons who have nothing to depend upon but their integrity, for bread: I will watch them narrowly, but I will not even have the disappearance of the jewels mentioned in the house—no, not to any one.' And, winding her arms about me, she added, while she attempted to smile, 'Do not, dearest Sarah, fulfil the legend of the Ruby Heart—break not mine by disclosing this secret; breathe not a syllable of what you have unintentionally discovered. Every thing that I possess is your papa's. He may do what he chooses with all—I live but in him, and for him. If he has taken the jewels, they are safe; they are well employed, doubtless for some temporary purpose that will hereafter be satisfactorily explained: and, indeed,' she added, quickly,

‘some of them I gave him myself to have the setting altered.’ Mamma coloured as she spoke the last words; I knew they were not true, and *she* knew *I* knew it—poor mamma, how I pity her!”

“Miss Herbert, I must request that you will say no more on this painful subject; it is one which, however it may seem to cast a shadow of blame on one of your parents, *I* cannot listen to, neither is it fitting I should;” and Miss Clermont looked so distressed, that Miss Herbert loved her more than she had ever done.

After this discovery, Lady Herbert awaited the return of her husband, (from a journey he had been obliged, as he said, to make into Somersetshire, relative to the sale of timber, which he attended on the part of his friend Sir Charles Lennard,) before she would open the subject, and, connected as it was with every thing she most valued, it was now ever present to her mind. “I will not,” she thought, “scare him from returning to me, by writing any reproachful letters; when he comes home I will tell him all—but written words remain, and I would never have him feel—‘She mistrusted me.’” Alas! did her heart respond to the assertion? No; she was conscious that it refused assent: “Still,” she thought, “*I* may be wrong. The husband of my youth, the father of my child, the first and only object of my passionate love, he may fail to *me*, but I will never fail to *him*. There is consolation to the wronged heart in love, to think that it is true to its idol, even after that idol has been broken to pieces.”

Lady Herbert was sitting bending over her fire on one of the short grim days of December, forming castles, not in the air, but in the glowing embers, when some one entered, so gently, she did not hear him approach, till Sir Charles Lennard spoke.

“Sir Charles!” she exclaimed (for it was he,) “your presence surprises me. Why, I thought you were in Somersetshire.”

“Did you so, Lady Herbert? and why, pray?”

“Why, because Herbert is there attending the sale of timber on your estates.”

“Lord Herbert is very obliging,” he replied; “but this is the first time I have heard of the circumstance.”

Fortunately for Lady Herbert the room was nearly dark, and she concealed her face from the fire-light with a screen;—there was a pause in the conversation. Sir Charles threw

himself into a chair, and seemed to have established himself there for some time. After a pause, he asked her if she would like to hear a very fine singer, who was just come from Italy, an aspirant for the place of prima donna at the opera the ensuing season.

"If it would amuse you and Miss Herbert, I would desire her to come any evening you may appoint. La Signora Lanti has, I assure you, a magnificent voice, and can modulate it so as not to overpower the ear, even in a small-sized chamber. This is a rare knowledge; for in general public singers, accustomed to sing on the stage, are any thing but pleasant in a less arena."

Lady Herbert replied, without thinking what she was saying,

"You are very kind. Yes; I should like to hear La Signora Lanti."

"Shall I bring her here to-night?"

"Yes—no! I think I would rather wait till Herbert comes home."

"Oh! he has heard her a thousand times already; and if he does come he will be delighted to hear her again."

"Very well," replied Lady Herbert, "you know what is most agreeable to Herbert, he is so fond of you;" and her voice assumed a tone of kindness, as she thought, yes, you are loved by my love.

"Well, that matter is settled, Lady Herbert. I only called to know if I could be of any use to you. I am glad I thought of the Lanti—good morning."

"How strange!" Lady Herbert said inwardly; "dark shadows seem gathering round me. Herbert has told me untruths more than once—miserable thought! Better to receive a dagger in one's breast, than be conscious of duplicity in a beloved object!" and poor Lady Herbert could have exclaimed in her wretchedness, like Macbeth, "Take any shape but that, and I could dare thee!" "Yes"—she said, half suffocated with the rising anguish of many miserable convictions which crowded upon her—"yes, let him do any thing but *deceive me*."

Lady Herbert's state of mind was such that she had of late found even her child's presence irksome. She dreaded betraying her feelings to her, and wished that she at least should never know her sorrows. "But how can that be," she thought, "when already the absence of the jewels has *awoke suspicion* in her mind?" and then she reflected with

bitter sorrow on the incalculable injury done to children by witnessing their parents' follies or delinquencies; above all, by living on in the daily observance of fraud—concealment—intrigue. Already Sarah's eyes are opened—already she has learnt to know that her father and mother are severed in heart—that knowledge poisons the whole source of pure and youthful feelings. If children do not see confidence and fidelity between their parents, where can they look for it? Not in the gay world's society; not in the generality of persons in any rank of life; but, if it exists not in the home of our youth, where will it ever be found to exist?

The evening came, Lord de Montmorenci was announced. Miss Herbert said to him,

"I am so happy to see you to-night! for Sir Charles Lennard is to bring the Lanti to sing to us, and we shall not be so dull as we have been lately."

"I am never dull," he replied, "in your and your mamma's society; and I doubt if any singing will please me so well as her own. But how came she to invite the Lanti?"

"Mamma did not invite her. Sir Charles Lennard proposed bringing her."

Lord de Montmorenci's countenance wore a peculiar expression of seriousness, and it did not pass unnoticed by the observant Miss Herbert. But her attention was diverted by the arrival of the cantatrice, handed in by Sir Charles, and followed by one of those little Italian yellow grubs covered with black hair, half men, half monkeys, who attend upon ladies of that denomination either as husbands, or cousins, or *cavalieri servente*, or accompaniments, in short: The usual introduction was made, the coffee offered and accepted, the instrument opened—the signora sang. Nothing could be more finished than her style, nothing more melodious than her voice. The little grub accompanied her, and from time to time gave his note of approbation in some hyperbolic expression or gesticulation; but, nevertheless, the singing was good, the voice was fine, and yet Lady Herbert liked it not, and she expressed as much to Lord de Montmorenci.

He looked at her steadfastly, and asked her, "if she had never heard the Lanti before, nor ever seen her," he said, "at any of the concerts where she has sung."

"Never."

He relapsed into silence.

"What are you staring so at mamma for?" whispered Miss Herbert to Sir Charles Lennard. "Do you see any thing wonderful in her appearance?"

"Wondrously handsome, Miss Herbert; but as that is what you must have always heard from your birth, perhaps it is nothing new—if I stared, it was unconsciously."

"Not so, Sir Charles. You are perfectly conscious you were staring, and thinking too."

"You do me a great deal of honour, Miss Herbert, to be the interpreter of my looks, but really I am not aware of the accusation you have brought against me;" and then turning to the Lanti, he requested her to sing a particular song, in which she accompanied herself. She prepared to comply, and, taking off her gloves, preluded upon the instrument; but an ornament that depended from her wrist struck against the keys, and she interrupted herself to detach the chain from her arm and lay it aside. Lady Herbert was close to her, and held out her hand to receive the jewel: in doing so, she uttered a faint shriek, and falling back in her chair seemed nearly fainting. While the persons present clustered round her to offer their assistance, the door opened, and, without announcement, in walked Lord Herbert.

Lord de Montmorenci looked at Sir Charles Lennard, but his countenance bore the same placid expression it ever bore. Miss Clermont was rubbing Lady Herbert's temples with Hungary water—Miss Herbert sustaining her head. For a few minutes, no one spoke; at length, Lord Herbert said, affecting to speak cheerfully, and to take his wife's indisposition as a joke,

"I am glad to find you have been all amusing yourselves so well in my absence, acting a charade apparently; and La Signora Lanti, too! I did not know she was an acquaintance of my wife's."—Then stopping suddenly, he looked around, as no one immediately answered him, and his eye fell on the ruby heart. The whole scene was developed to him; but in a moment he had taken his determination, and beckoning to Sir Charles Lennard, he whispered:—

"For your own sake, you cannot betray me; remember it was you who gave the Lanti that jewel;" and then approaching Lady Herbert, he professed his anxiety at finding her really ill, and making apologies to the cantatrice and the gentlemen, contrived to dismiss them before Lady Herbert had recovered from her insensibility.

"Mabel, dearest," as soon as they were alone, "what has occasioned your indisposition? Speak to me, love. Tell me what has thus overcome you?"

"The certainty that you love me no more."

And she then detailed the circumstances which had led her to this conclusion. She spoke slow and distinctly, and with that calm of manner which is so often the effect of despair. Her husband assumed a gay and careless air, and said,

"Really, Mabel, nothing can excuse your unjust suspicions, except that romantic disposition of yours, which has every now and then disturbed our peace. Of course, Leonard was not going to divulge the state of his affairs to you. He was perfectly aware that I was engaged in an attempt to rescue him from some cheats of lawyers, who had contrived to get his affairs into their hands; but if that had been known, it might have prevented my serving him as I have done. And as to that foolish ruby heart, I gave it to him with the other jewels, upon his informing me that he had not been able to raise a sufficient sum upon them for his immediate wants without it. A debt of honour which demanded instant reimbursement, or he would have been blown at the club: so, of course, I took it, and sent it him. The unlucky part of the business is, that the Lanti should have bought the jewel, and the wrong thing, his having brought her to your house; not but what she goes every where as a singer by profession, and, therefore, why not? only it would have been as well if he had allowed any one else to do so; for you know, they say she is his mistress."

Lady Herbert made no reply—complained of illness—she did not feign when she so complained, and retired for the night.

From that time,\* Lady Herbert knew what she before had only feared, that all esteem for the object of her passion was gone—nothing remained but her own unchanging love, which seemed to exist without aliment, to stand firm and self-poised without any basis to rest upon, and so illusion, her own self-raised illusion, was not yet entirely dispelled.

Lord Herbert was more frequently at home than he had been for months. The business of parliament commenced, and Lord de Montmorenci's enthusiastic devotion to the side of politics which he had espoused, inspired Lord Herbert with something of his zeal. The friendship which had been cooled between them appeared to revive; and, on the



other hand, Lord Herbert's intimacy with Sir Charles Lennard decreased. The latter, however, was as assiduous as ever in his visits to Herbert House, and established himself so constantly in the drawing-room, that Lady Herbert hardly felt the apartment her own. Besides, her dislike or rather distrust of the personal character of the man,—any one who had assumed the familiarity he did, would have become unpleasant to her; and at length she complained of it to her husband. He received the communication at first without giving it any serious answer; but, when Lady Herbert pressed the matter upon his attention, he replied angrily, that whoever he liked, she was sure to dislike; and that if she continued to make his home as dull as she had hitherto done, and by her caprice and ill temper to render it unpleasant for any of his friends to seek his society within his own walls, that of course he would go elsewhere, and meet them in more agreeable quarters.

He said this in a tone, and with a gesture of angry impatience, which cut her to the heart. She made no reply, and he left the room.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

In going to my naked bed, as one that would have slept,  
 I heard a wife sing to her child that long before had wept;  
 She sighed sore, and sang full sweet, to bring the babe to rest,  
 That would not cease, but cried still, in sucking at her breast.  
 She was full weary of her watch, and grieved with her child,  
 She rocked it, and rated it, until on her it smiled;  
 Then did she say, "Now have I found the proverb true to prove,  
 The falling out of faithful friends renewing is of love."

RICHARD EDWARDS.

WHATEVER were Lady Herbert's sorrows, she had the good sense and the steady principle not to suffer them to overwhelm or induce her to throw up all chance of reclaiming her husband. A very few days after his unjust and cruel accusation, she met him with her usual sweetness of countenance, and said,

"As we purpose taking Sarah into the gay world next year, had we not better have some parties at home, previously?"

Lord Herbert's countenance brightened up, and he replied in the affirmative.

It is a melancholy thing to a heart which truly loves, to find that it has no power over the object of its attachment, except through the medium of others. When we discover that we no longer suffice to them for amusement, or rather when *happiness* ceases to be amusement, and that any thing, any person, is resorted to for interest rather than ourselves; this is the great trial, which first shakes the very basis of love. Still Lady Herbert would not resign the hope of reclaiming him, and she busied herself in the arrangement of her party, with a zeal and an interest which had for its object a far deeper motive than the frivolous surface which appeared upon the face of the proceedings.

When the cards of invitation were issued, they excited much conversation in the little exclusive circle calling itself *The World*. Oh! the misnomers and mistakes which arise out of human vanity and folly. *The World* then were all astir to account for the unusual event; and, at a dinner given by Sir Charles Lennard, it was affirmed that at last Lady Herbert's eyes were opened—she was jealous! but had the good sense to endeavour to conceal it, and not to give herself *des ridicules*. Besides, it was added, the everlasting presence of *the guardian* became rather too much for Lord Herbert's nerves, especially when not diversified by something more lively. The informers looked at each other significantly. It was quite new to throw a shadow of suspicion on Lady Herbert's character, and the report spread like wildfire, that she had at last descended from her high pedestal.

There is nothing so welcome to those who have not escaped calumny, as to know that others share their condemnation. Many persons who had avoided Lady Herbert in public, as being of a different species from *themselves*, now became familiar, pressed their attentions upon her, and were anxious to cultivate her more intimate acquaintance; the very thing they had evaded, till they supposed her to be on a moral level with themselves.

Three days were only to elapse before that on which the assembly was to be given at Herbert House. As Lord Herbert's cabriolet was announced, he said to his wife, as though he had just thought of the circumstance,

"Of course you have invited the Lanti?"

"No, I have not."

"Oh, but you must though; the whole thing will be stupid without music, and nobody sings so well as she does. So, I beg you will rectify that omission, and let us have, besides her, a variety of the best performers.

Lady Herbert followed her husband out of the room. She put her hand on his arm, and said beseechingly, "*Not the Lanti—Surely not the Lanti?*"

He laughed, and replied carelessly, "Just as you please, only I do not appear unless the Lanti sings."

"Herbert, dear Herbert, spare me this—under my own roof—before an-assembled multitude."

"Lady Herbert, I am sick of this girlish affectation, this romance, this Minerva-press sentiment; you know my opinion: good morning!" Humming an air, he then passed on to his carriage, leaving his wife standing in the same spot, for several minutes unable to move, unable even to think. She was unwilling to return to the room where Miss Clermont and her daughter were, for she knew they would observe her emotion, and wonder at the tears which now poured down her cheeks, and which she could no longer restrain.

Lord de Montmorenci came hastily into the ante-room, and, shocked at her appearance, he was himself thrown off his guard; so speaking under the impression of his feelings, he said, "What has occurred! what can have occurred, Lady Herbert, to give you pain?" She made no reply—but, falling into the nearest chair, sobbed in the bitterness of her heart.

Lord de Montmorenci besought her to tell him if there was any thing he could do to relieve her.

"Oh, no, no! leave me, leave me!" she cried, as though his presence was particularly hateful; and he obeyed, saying he would send Miss Clermont to her: she came, accompanied by her daughter.

"It is nothing, nothing," whispered Lady Herbert in reply to their inquiries, as soon as she could speak: "Nothing but that hysterical affection to which I have been subject lately."

"Poor, dear mamma!" said Miss Herbert, chafing her temples, and expressing by her caresses and her countenance, that she knew her mother's tears arose from a serious cause. "Poor, dear mamma! what can I do for you?"

"Nothing, love, nothing; it will soon pass off—I will lie down for an hour or two, and then I shall be quite well

again. Sarah, Lord de Montmorenci is come to escort you on horseback; go out, love, while it is fine, Miss Clermont will take care of me."

Miss Herbert was at length prevailed upon to leave her mamma, and went to ride, while Miss Clermont sat by Lady Herbert's couch; the latter affected to slumber, but in reality she only closed her eyes, whilst she pondered inwardly what course to pursue: at last, starting up, she said, "Miss Clermont, will you do me a favour? I forgot to invite La Signora Lanti to complete our concert on Wednesday next; will you kindly write an invitation for me, to her?"

Miss Clermont looked at Lady Herbert fixedly, and was silent for some little time, but the expression of her countenance betrayed astonishment. At length she exclaimed, "Is it possible! Is Lady Herbert going to invite the Lanti to her house?"

"Why should I not?" asked the latter.

Miss Clermont was for a moment silent; at length she said, "Her character is notorious, I believe."

"So is that of many others of her class and profession, but with her moral qualities, I have nothing to do; and it is much the same case in regard to many persons who are received in all societies, so that I have long thought there was one line only to be drawn: namely, that which exists in our own hearts, and in the choice of our intimate associates,—the rest is conventional. The pure in heart are those who themselves walk unspotted through the world, not those who are curious inquirers into the failings of others; and, after all, who only see the crime but feel not the temptation, perhaps, which may have led to it—those, in short, who are indulgent to others, but strict to themselves."

"Your own security of virtue, Lady Herbert, makes you feel thus; but may I be permitted to say, that in thinking of your daughter, something of a more marked line of disapprobation of vice may be demanded."

Lady Herbert felt that Miss Clermont was in fact right; she had been almost unconsciously making the worse appear the better reason, in order to have an excuse for doing that which she was inclined to do, because she thought it might be a means of drawing her husband within the circle of her own society; so she said, "I am determined to invite the Lanti. Sarah is too young, too innocent, to know

any thing of her private history: No, Sarah is in no danger. She is above all that which is so called for the young in general; her character is more steady than that of many persons twice her age. Yes, please God, Sarah is safe."

"Well, Lady Herbert, as you please. I am ready to obey you. What shall I write?"

"A card of invitation like the rest, to the Lanti." And Miss Clermont executed the command.

While this scene was passing in Lady Herbert's dressing-room, a conversation of another sort, though on the same subject, took place between Miss Herbert and Lord de Montmorenci; when the latter expressed his hope that they should find her mamma better on their return from their ride, she replied,

"Indeed we may hope, but we cannot expect it: I now know too much to believe poor dear mamma will ever be happy again; and, as Miss Clermont never will allow me to speak openly to her, I find it quite necessary to make known my feelings to some one who will partake them,—who can that person be so well adapted in every respect to give me counsel as you, my guardian, my friend, the friend of both my parents?"

Lord de Montmorenci requested that before Miss Herbert honoured him with her confidence, she would ask her mamma's leave to do so.

"That is impossible," she replied quickly, "the story is too dreadful; the whole affair one, in which poor dear mamma is too deeply involved to be a fair judge between my liberty of choosing a confidant or not: dear Lord de Montmorenci, papa is breaking her heart—what do I say? it is broken already."

Miss Herbert proceeded to detail every fact which had come to her knowledge, and a thousand suppositions besides, arising out of circumstances which, from her earlier years, she had observed, and now drew conclusions from. Lord de Montmorenci was too much interested in the melancholy history his ward confided to him, not to allow her to go through its entire detail; and, with a few interruptions indicative of the deep part he took in her own and in her parent's happiness, he heard a narrative of long existing facts, which he had no idea were of such ancient date. When she finished speaking, he replied;

"Whatever unfortunate circumstances may at present dis sever your parents, they are equally *your* parents, equal-

ly entitled to *your* duty. Oh! Miss Herbert, if these things be indeed as you have stated them, may you be directed by the only Director who can steer your youth safe through the dangers and sorrows of your position."

They had now reached Herbert House, and, when they alighted from their horses, he pressed her hand affectionately, and with a tenderer interest than he had ever felt for her before; whilst on her part, that first outpouring of her heart, that casting herself upon his protection to shield her and her unfortunate mother from the peril which threatened them, gave to her whole character a new impulse, and coloured her future existence. It is the nature of woman to love those in whom they confide; nay, it is a most dangerous step for any woman to make a confidence to any man; she is prone to become the slave of him to whom she so intrusts herself: if he is an old man, he assumes authority which frequently becomes tyranny; if he is a young man, he either feels for her himself, or excites too tender an intimacy in her breast, and then a worse tyranny ensues. It is very difficult for a woman who has no near male relation willing to aid and to support her, to know what to do in cases of doubt and difficulty, and it would be far better if all such could rely upon that protection which is from above, and that self-confidence which proceeds from sound principle, than to put any confidence in man. It is easier, however, to lay down rules, than to follow them; and nothing could be more natural than for Miss Herbert to unburden her heart to the only person whom she had been intimate with from her cradle, and whom she looked upon in the light of a father.

One assembly is so like another in all its outward shows and appearances, that providing it consists of the same class of persons, a spectator who is not of that precise circle, would observe no variation whatever: but, this apparent similarity only covers the surface,—there is an essential difference in every reunion of persons which is occasioned by their public or private interests, or by both. In times of political excitement, a severe shock is given to private society; for even women who may be desirous of keeping out of all intrigue whatever, find it very difficult to steer clear of giving offence to some of their relations. There ought to be a neutral flag unfurled for all such; and under its banners those should congregate who desire in sincerity to avoid the dangers of a conflict.

Of these, Lady Herbert would have been anxiously desirous to become a member. She had never had but one ambition—the ambition of living for love. But it was *such* love as the world does not understand—and from very spite, like the Evil One in the garden of Eden—would destroy, if it could. An assembly at Herbert House was such an unusual thing, that every person came, if only for curiosity; and the whole phalanx of all that was deemed brilliant in London, of every party and of every prejudice, were under the same roof for that one night.

The details of such an assemblage are necessarily sufficiently insipid and monotonous. They have been described to satiety; and, however some of these descriptions may have contained a certain degree of piquancy, they are generally untrue to nature, if that word may stand figuratively to express the meaning of factitious conventions. The people constituting them do not visibly *do* any thing that is extraordinary—any thing that is *marquante*—which can be laid hold of as a circumstance to make use of, as a painter would do a spot of brilliant light or colour to give effect to his picture. On the contrary, they avoid, some with incalculable care, and others by long practice, any thing which may be tangibly laid hold of in manner, dress, or demeanour. There is an imperceptible varnish laid over the whole, which it requires the tact of a sixth sense to see beneath. How, then, can one describe the assembly at Herbert House, or any other in the *best* societies, any where.

Yet under this surface there does exist—there ever must exist—a motley variety of passions, in all their shades of human feeling; and with the persons whose history is related in these pages, there was a more than usual quota of feelings in play.

Lord Herbert had been morose, and absented himself from home for some days previously. He was now lounging in an outward room with an air of *ennui*, when Sir Charles Lennard entered, conducting the Lanti. She stopped, on seeing Lord Herbert, and paid him the compliments of usage; told him she had had the honour of an invitation from Lady Herbert, and had brought some new cavatinas, that she thought would suit the general taste. Lord Herbert's surprise at beholding her could only be equalled by his pleasure, except that he did not like seeing Sir Charles doing the honours to her. He betrayed, however, neither the one nor the other of these feelings; and, as she passed to the inner rooms, a stranger might have supposed it was

some princess entering the circle, so many were the persons who crowded around her, apparently anxious for a smile or a bow of recognition; and one or two women absolutely rose from their seats to touch first one side, then another, of her cheek; but these, at least, were not *Englishwomen*. Thus was the Lanti conducted through rows of persons of the highest fashion making way for her triumphal entry, till at last she reached Lady Herbert. The latter commanded whatever feelings agitated her, and, except that Lord de Montmorenci saw her turn pale, no one could observe any change in her appearance. She accosted the Italian with that quiet English dignity which supersedes all acquired manner, and spoke to her upon the only subject on which she could address her, the music which she was to sing that night. After various complaints of the climate, and of the heat of the room, and of the noise, and the fatigue incidental to her profession, she sang, and sang her best. The plaudits were bestowed with rather more enthusiasm than was usual; still she complained to Lord Herbert of the coldness of an English audience, and, rising in the middle of a song, declared she would not sing another note that night.

"Her engagements," she said, "with the public, would not allow her to waste her powers in private societies," and for the rest of the night she sat in a sort of state surrounded by the first of the land, who vied with each other in doing her homage. Miss Clermont observed, in her quiet but impressive manner, to Lady Herbert,

"If a woman is ambitious of obtaining admiration, she must become an actress or a singer—how dangerous it is for a young creature like Miss Herbert to witness such scenes!"

"Ah, my dear Miss Clermont, there is no virtue in shutting them out from our view—the virtue consists in walking past them uncontaminated; and, after all, who could wish for that sort of homage?"

"Perhaps it is not worth having," rejoined Miss Clermont, "but nevertheless, it is impossible not to feel, where it *ought* to be paid, and where it is *not*."

She looked at Lord Herbert as she spoke, and Lady Herbert was fully conscious of her meaning, but unwilling to provoke any farther observations, she moved to another part of the room.

Sir Charles Lennard watched an opportunity to join the



latter, and, leaning over the back of the chair on which Lady Herbert was sitting, asked her if she had any commands to Paris, as he proposed going there in a few days; she answered something civil, which meant nothing, but proved to him that her thoughts were intently fixed on the Lanti, who was talking eagerly to her husband.

"Forgive me, Lady Herbert," he said, "if I venture for once to pass those bounds which your manner towards me has prescribed, and to tell you that I am your real friend—while others who arrogate to themselves that privilege, deceive you. I have not deceived you in any one instance, and if I took the liberty of bringing that singer into your presence to amuse an idle hour, I did so in the utter ignorance of those circumstances which may have rendered my conduct questionable to you; but I request you will do me the favour to believe, that I am in no wise to blame."

Lady Herbert felt distressed at the information which this speech implied, and yet there was nothing in it at which she could express displeasure. After a moment's pause, she replied,

Professional singers are engaged to amuse without any reference to their private character; it cannot, therefore, be of the least consequence to the company *what* they are, morally speaking, providing their manners are in no wise offensive."

"So it ought to be, Lady Herbert, but so it is not,—for of all the persons assembled in this choice selection of company around us, who is there that receives so much attention or show of respect as the singer—The Lanti?"

This was intended to sting, and it failed not in its aim; but it failed to produce that alarm in her manner which might have led to intimacy. Sir Charles Lennard saw she was determined *not* to understand him; so he left her to ruminate on his words, without presuming to say more.

Lord de Montmorenci observed the peculiar manner which Sir Charles had contrived to throw into his conversation with Lady Herbert, and he could not avoid hearing some of those common-place observations which are made by the idle and the malevolent on an object who is at once envied, and for its very superiority hated. Sir Charles Lennard was one of those men who are known never to speak to any woman but with one design; and it was consequently settled as a fact, that Lady Herbert was grown tired of the secluded life she had hitherto led, and of

the Chevalier de la Triste figure, as they called Lord de Montmorenci, who had dwelt in the moated castle; that she had determined to live like other people, and was by no means averse to the attentions of Sir Charles Lennard. All this, Lord de Montmorenci overheard, and, though he was indignant at the falsehood, he felt that it would be unwise to make a scene, especially as the chief speaker was a woman. In the mean time Miss Herbert had watched her father's attention to the Lanti; and her eyes sought her guardian's to express the anguish she felt; but, mingled with her sorrow for her mother, there was another softer sentiment of the nature of which she was unconscious; it was that indefinite sweetness of being in secret communion with a person who is delightful to us, and she indulged in it to its full extent. Lord de Montmorenci on his part, accustomed to think of her only as a child, and, being totally devoid of vanity,—above all devoid of any answering sentiment, ascribed her manner to the interest she took in her mother, an interest which he shared to the utmost, and which, therefore, formed a tie between them as enchanting to him, as it was dangerous to her peace.

Many hearts were lost and won at that assembly, and, though it passed off like all similar scenes, it left traces of its power which were of no trivial import to the actors who were engaged in it.

When Lady Herbert had bade her child good night, and blessed her, she dismissed her maid, and sat down to ruminate on the past hours, so falsely to her called hours of pleasure. "So then," she thought, "my sorrows and my wrongs are become public; it is not enough that I know I am bereft of my husband's love, but the multitude must likewise point the finger of derision at me—or worse, that glance of pity so humiliating, so galling to the proud and wounded mind. What could Sir Charles Lennard mean but that the Lanti is my rival? At least, I did not betray my feelings to him—to no one will I ever betray them; and, though happiness can never return to me—for once deceived, the nature of *my* love is sullied, and can never flow in freshness of confidence again—still, I am Herbert's wife; no one can wrest that tenure from me. I shall stand alone, it is true, but I shall stand alone on my vantage ground of love and faith, unbroken, though I am a scorned and forsaken wife."

There is a gratification in reverting to the pure sentiments

of an honest heart, which for a time lifts that heart above its woes. But then enfeebling tenderness steals over it again, and sweeps away these walls of circumvallation within which it had intrenched itself; and again it becomes a prey to doubt, to anguish,—to all the bitter torments of unrequited love. And so it was with poor Lady Herbert, as she listened for Lord Herbert's footstep that night! Yes, she listened till her own heart's pulse echoed her wishes in mockery. He came not: at last, worn out, she sank into a troubled slumber.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE BIRTHDAY.

Oh! be thou blest with all that Heaven can send,  
Long health, long youth, long pleasure, and a friend.

\* \* \* \* \*

Let joy or ease, let affluence or content,  
And the gay conscience of a life well spent,  
Calm every thought, inspire every grace,  
Glow in thy heart, and smile upon thy face;  
Let day improve on day, and year on year,  
Without a pain, a trouble or a fear,  
Till death unfelt that tender frame destroy,  
In some soft dream or ecstasy of joy,  
Peaceful sleep out the sabbath of the tomb,  
And wake to raptures in a life to come.

POPE.

THE next day Lady Herbert awoke with a sense of weight oppressing her, which was at first an undefined anguish, but soon every circumstance returned to her recollection with the clear harsh lines of truth.

"And he has not been home all night!" she superadded to the catalogue of pain; this was no *new* circumstance, but its frequent recurrence seemed to aggravate the offence.

"How shall I pass this tedious day?" she asked herself, "how hide from Sarah that I am wretched. Alas! alas! can I hide from her that which she has already known. Oh! Herbert, for your child's sake at least, if mine is nothing to you, affect the virtue you practise no more."

As she thus spoke, her daughter was at her door asking to come in.

"Mamma, papa, I am come to wish you both joy, this is papa's birthday."

A bound of Lady Herbert's heart—a painful swell almost to bursting, prevented her immediate reply.

"Are you asleep?" continued Miss Herbert. "Wake, wake, it is very late, and I have brought you violets, and must kiss you both, and welcome this morning to you before any one else sees you."

"Sarah, dear, come in," said Lady Herbert, "I am alone; your papa went to Lord de Montmorenci's villa last night. You have been a more faithful chronicler of times and seasons than we have, for we had forgotten that this *was* your papa's birthday; but I am glad you reminded me of it—I must prepare some little record to welcome and hallow the day. Kiss me, dear child, and bless you for having made me recollect that which I ought not to have forgotten."

And Lady Herbert felt as though she had been guilty of great unkindness, and threw the tide of her displeasure upon herself—happy to lay blame any where in order to lose the sense of that which rested on the object of her love.

"Sarah, dearest, we must go to Storr and Mortimer's, to bring a present for your papa;" and she embraced her child with a feeling of double tenderness, which passionate love for the father, united to that of love to his offspring. There was an interest and a busy feeling of the recollected devotion of by-gone years which gave to Lady Herbert's manner an appearance of gaiety. Her eyes sparkled, her cheeks were flushed; and this semblance of a happiness she was never to know again, might have deceived an indifferent spectator, but could not deceive her penetrating child.

"It is Lord Herbert's birthday," said Miss Clermont, meeting Lady Herbert in the drawing-room, "may I request you to present my grateful tribute of affection to my benefactor, and offer him this trifling mark of my respectful attachment." The present was a beautifully embroidered waistcoat, "and Frederick, too," she added, "has commissioned me to give *his* offering; he hopes soon to come and present his good wishes in person—in the mean while, he sends these pistols, which are of most curious workmanship, and were won by him in the action with the pirate—when he fought so gallantly."

"They are, indeed, very beautiful!" said Lady Herbert, opening the case which contained them, "and I feel all your kindness and affection, and accept your good wishes, dear Anna, for Herbert and myself;" and she kissed Miss Clermont as though she had been to her a second daughter; "but," she added, "I like these flowers, so delicately wrought, more than the inlay, fine as it is, of those murderous weapons. The amaranth, the heart's-ease, and the rose convey to me sweeter thoughts than these instruments of death—take them out of my sight, Anna!" and she shuddered. "Yet it is foolish so to feel—men must delight in glory, and in all that is connected with it.—I am sure Herbert will be pleased with your brother's gift."

The carriage was announced—Lady Herbert and her daughter drove to the jewellers. When they were at the door of the shop, some equipage impeded their entrance—Miss Herbert put her head out of the window—"It is papa's cabriolet!" she said, and at the same time Lord Herbert leaped into it, and, driving furiously past them, kissed his hand and was out of sight in a moment.

"Papa, papa!" said Miss Herbert.

But she spoke to herself as it were, and sinking back in the carriage—the servant had let the step down some moments before either Lady Herbert or her daughter were sufficiently recovered from their surprise to get out. Lady Herbert was first to rally her presence of mind, and, though she was sick at heart, she made no scene, but quietly walked into the shop. The polite attendants of the establishment placed before her every thing that was most brilliant, most new and tasteful, of their splendid wares. She *seemed* to look at them—but she saw them not; and Miss Herbert was scarcely less agitated than herself. Still one case of jewellery was opened after another, and, at last, Lady Herbert said, mechanically,

"Those emeralds are peculiarly beautiful."

"It gives me the greatest pleasure to hear your ladyship say so, for they have been selected with infinite cost and trouble for his lordship, who superintended the setting of them himself, and we are just going to send them home."

Then, taking out several of the ornaments from their cases, the shopman displayed their brilliancy in various lights, and added,

"These, your ladyship observes, form either an ornament for the sleeves or the hair; but we have yet one thing

to show you which is truly magnificent—there is not a crowned head that can boast of such a gorgeous jewel;” and, taking from a drawer a golden casket, itself a gem, displayed *The Ruby Heart*, now pending from a *solitaire* of the same stones, and tied, as the jeweller observed, with true-love knots between every link of the chain which fastened the jewels at intervals together.

Lady Herbert did not faint; she felt as though she were turned to stone; but Miss Herbert said aloud,

“That ruby is mamma’s!”

The jeweller bowed and smiled. “We guessed as much; and may we hope for your ladyship’s approval of the mode in which we have set it?”

Lady Herbert replied, “If Lord Herbert is satisfied, so am I.”

Miss Herbert looked at her mother; if she loved her before, she worshipped her now. She thought her a martyr as well as a saint, and, seizing her hand, kissed it.

Lady Herbert was very near overcome by this action, and by the state of excitement in which she beheld her daughter; but she only whispered to her,

“I desire, dearest Sarah, that you would suspend your judgment upon this circumstance, and that you will avoid all expression whatever which might render us a subject for idle and groundless reports.”

Miss Herbert pressed her mother’s hand; and having made some trifling purchases, they were about to leave the shop, when the entrance of the Lanti, leaning upon two of her Italian cavaliers, prevented them from passing; and the former, advancing to Lady Herbert, accosted her in bad French with all the garrulity of an insolent, low woman, who is, by the folly of our country, received on a footing of intimacy in societies where such persons have no pretension to be admitted, except as hired performers. Lady Herbert’s quiet courtesy had, however, the effect of silencing this presumption, and Miss Herbert made no reply whatever to a compliment she paid to her, nor even bowed in passing her.

Mother and daughter were silent as they returned home. Lady Herbert had no one with whom she could take counsel—no one to whom she could unburden her heart of its sorrow: being thrown upon oneself, in the hour of trial, for strength and guidance, adds strength to a strong character, but overwhelms a weak one. Lady Herbert had nothing to

fear from her upright principles, and clear, unbiassed judgment—but she had every thing to fear from the yielding tenderness of her own heart. There is a peculiar wretchedness in being wretched on a day which for years has been consecrated to joy. Would her husband wholly forget that *this* day had been always esteemed such by his wife? Would he not return for a few hours, at least? And then the thought that if he did return, it would not be to find his home a delight, but a weariness, deprived her of any refuge in which her worn out feelings might rest. Then, succeeded a reference to her own conduct towards him; a comparison between the nature of her attachment and the return which she had met with; a question of how far a wife ought to endure ill treatment; where she ought to resign; and where, or at what point, she ought to resist.

“Not yet,” she finally determined, “not yet is the time arrived when I must plead my cause; forbearance is my part—God give me strength to fulfil it! Away with suspicion—I must *have proof*, before I tell him that he has wronged me. Shall a wife criminate her husband on the witness of a shopkeeper?” And, again indignant at herself, she only longed for the moment when she could see Lord Herbert, and bid Heaven bless him with its choicest blessings.

Lady Herbert descended to her drawing-room late that afternoon, with feelings of a very different nature from those in which she had commenced the day. So strong was her love—so rooted were the fibres of her existence to those of Lord Herbert’s, that she had succeeded in deceiving herself to a certain degree, and willingly assumed a veil where she could not succeed in framing an excuse. True love is faith—and faith is a beautiful gift, which is given to the pure in heart.

As Lady Herbert opened the door of her drawing-room, she heard voices; one which she could never mistake—it was Lord Herbert’s. She bounded forward with an elastic step, and said, kissing his forehead,

“*Benedetta sia’l giorno, e’l mesè é l’anno.*”

“A thousand thanks, dear Mabel; but there is a time, you know, when one would rather drop one’s birthdays altogether, and you and I have arrived at that period,” he said, laughing.

“Miss Clermont, don’t you agree with me?”

“Lady Herbert does not seem to be of that opinion, my

lord; and, in obedience to her feelings, I have ventured to lay these offerings before you," pointing to those she had already shown Lady Herbert.

"Ah," he rejoined, "very true; I am exceedingly ungallant not to have postponed my sinking of birthdays till next year, considering your beautiful presents. I shall fancy myself a young free man again, when I wear the work of your fairy fingers, Miss Clermont; and, as to the pistols," taking them up and placing the muzzle of one to his heart, "I deserve to be shot by them if I do not acknowledge the extraordinary beauty of their form and workmanship. There is to be a famous shooting match in a few days;—by the way, Tom is coming to town on purpose. I shall try if these pistols are as good as beautiful, like their donor," and he bowed to Miss Clermont.

"Pardon me, my lord; that compliment does not apply to me in any sense; I am not the donor; that is my brother's boast."

"Dear Frederick," said Lord Herbert; "he is a fine, brave fellow! When does he join us?"

"His ship is to be in Plymouth very shortly, and then I hope he will obtain leave of absence."

Lady Herbert, who had waited patiently during this conversation, now took her husband's arm, and asked how he contrived to have come home without her knowing of his return.

"Why, though you do watch me like a cat watching a mouse, Mabel, it is just possible for a man to get into his house, without his wife's knowing it."

Lady Herbert gave him a tender glance of reproach, and, to recover her composure, took from her neck a watch and chain, which she placed around his, and said, trying to speak cheerfully,

"May this watch remind you how I am watching every moment when you are absent, and this chain be an emblem of that which binds us together—light, but lasting."

"Now, Mabel, I wonder you did not put that speech into verse, and then it would have been perfect. You are so fond of poetry, why did you let slip the opportunity for a little rhyme? But never mind, dear, you know I pardon the omission—many thanks," and he kissed her, and admired the present.

Miss Clermont had left the room, and the husband and wife were alone together—there was a pause—Lady Her-



bert felt afraid to speak—something seemed to choke her, and, on her husband's part, there was a similar feeling, though arising from a different cause. At last he broke silence; and, while he had recourse to the watch and chain, playing with them to hide his confusion, he said,

"Well, Mabel, now you have unlocked your doors, and received company, I hope you do not mean to resume the fortification system again. Your party went off admirably, and the music was good—we must follow it up, however, by something else, for there is nothing so flat as one solitary entertainment; like a single sky-rocket, it ought only to precede a thousand others; besides it is time that Sarah should see the world."

Miss Herbert came into the room, and, running up to her father, wished him a thousand happy returns of the day.

"But where have you been all the morning, papa?—we have been longing for you, and think that you ought not to have preferred any company to ours *this day*."

"That is your opinion, Sarah."

"Ah! and it's mamma's, too;" and the tears came into her eyes.

Lady Herbert spoke not—her heart was too full—one word would have opened the floodgate of feeling, and then she could not have bid it back. Her daughter saw all, felt all, and, with a tact, such as women alone possess, she said, after a moment's awkward silence,

"You know, papa, I am a bad workwoman, so I have not achieved any wonders with my needle, but I have endeavoured to learn some of your favourite airs, and will sing them to you to-night, if you will promise to stay with us."

"I always intended to do so," he replied, and Lady Herbert felt, at that moment, as though she were the happiest of women.

"It is strange how little aliment will sometimes suffice to entertain love, but then it must be often supplied. That evening, a family party met in Herbert House, and they were once more, to all appearance, a happy circle; Lord de Montmorenci was the only person present who was not a relation, and he was so much one of themselves, that his presence made no difference in the ease and familiarity of that social circle. Miss Herbert's promised songs were sung, and rapturously praised by her father.

"I had no idea, Sarah, that you *could* sing with such

pathos, such feeling, and I must add, so much taste; but you owe it all to Miss Clermont. Miss Clermont (going towards her) I had not anticipated such a result from the kind pains you have taken with Sarah. We owe you more than we can ever repay for giving her such a talent."

"No, my lord, I cannot allow you to say so, all debt is on my side; and, in respect to the expression of Miss Herbert's singing, it is, I assure you, entirely her own."

Lord de Montmorenci joined in her father's praise, and Miss Herbert, being requested to repeat one of the songs, did so in a manner that affected her hearers even to tears. Without being a feeble imitator of the inimitable Moore, she sang, from the same inspired source—she sang because she loved to sing—and because it was another vehicle to express that sentiment which was a part of herself. Miss Clermont spoke the truth when she said Miss Herbert owed nothing to her instructions—as certain plants are indigenous to certain soils, Sarah's music was the growth of her own feelings, and its effect was as original as it was irresistible. To witness her father's fond delight, as he hung enraptured over his daughter was happiness to Lady Herbert, such as she never thought she should have felt more. Lord de Montmorenci was wrapt in attention, and Miss Clermont, when she ended her song, asked him what he thought of her pupil's performance.

"It is exactly like her mother's," he replied, "only her voice is not yet so rich in tone as Lady Herbert's, but I dare say it will become so."

"Well, De Montmorenci, what sentence do you pronounce upon Sarah's singing?" asked Lord Herbert.

He repeated what he had just been saying.

"Ah yes, to be sure, Mabel did sing very well, but her voice is *passée* now; it is Miss Clermont, you know, who has instructed Sarah."

Lord de Montmorenci replied, "I do not reckon myself a judge of the subject, but I never desire to hear any music more charming than that of Lady Herbert's."

"You do me honour," replied Lord Herbert, in a forced manner, such as he could assume when he was not pleased.

The door opened—Sir Charles Lennard was announced. He went to the sofa on which Lady Herbert was sitting, and paid her a compliment, in his way, upon her husband's birth-day, his good looks and *her* own, and then offered a

large bunch of violets, which she accepted and placed in her bosom—then whispered something in her ear which no one but herself could hear.

She answered aloud, "I thought you were gone, or going to Paris."

Again he replied in a whisper.

Miss Clermont observed to Lord de Montmorenci, "I am afraid Lady Herbert is not well, she changes colour in so remarkable a manner."

Her observation was true; and it distressed the person to whom it was addressed; for once, however, he feigned and said he did not see any alteration in Lady Herbert's appearance. Miss Clermont looked steadily at him, and, with an air of deep concern, she added,

"All is not gold that glitters; the happiness which seems to reside under this roof is not genuine, it is of spurious quality; and I foresee a storm coming which will overthrow it entirely."

Lord de Montmorenci endeavoured not to understand her, and replied,

"Be not a prophesier of evil—it does not become your youth, Miss Clermont, to look on the dark side of things; at all events, if happiness does not reside here, it ought: for angels dwell beneath this roof."

"Oh, you know," she rejoined, laughing, "*we* women are all angels, but there are some of your sex, to whom the epithet does not exactly apply—what think you of Sir Charles?"

"Sir Charles is Lord Herbert's friend, and I am always inclined to think well of my friend's friend."

"What a Jesuitical answer! but never mind, do not be afraid, I shall not probe you farther. *Le Sage entend a demi mot.*"

And, passing from his side, Miss Clermont moved to a vacant chair by Lord Herbert, and asked one of those questions which seem to lead to nothing—but which are thrown out at a venture in order to begin a conversation:—

"Has your lordship seen the magnificent elephant newly arrived at the Zoological Gardens?"

"No; but I should like to do so. I will drive you there, to-morrow; as an old papa, you know, there can be nothing against etiquette in my doing so, and Lady Herbert and Sarah may join us. Will you allow me that pleasure?"

Miss Clermont fixed her eyes for a moment on his, and then dropping them suddenly, she replied,

"If you are sure I shall offend no one, I shall be most happy."

"Offend!—who—why? What! do you mean that Mabel will be jealous? Upon my honour, that would be too ridiculous," laughing. "You, who I have considered from a mere child to be always one of ourselves. No, no, she is tolerably ridiculous, sometimes; but she is not yet come to that."

Miss Clermont's countenance bore the marks of a thousand different emotions; but Lord Herbert did not decipher the characters he might have read there; he only repeated his invitation, which she accepted—then, as though suddenly recollecting something, she said,

"By the bye, I shall not get my perfumes from Paris, after all Sir Charles Lennard's offers to bring me some from thence; he is at Lady Herbert's feet as usual, and seems to have no thought of going hence."

"As to that, Miss Clermont, if you rely upon any thing that Lennard says he is going to do, or not to do, you may as well rely upon the winds; but he is a most agreeable man—I could not exist without him, and I believe he is the best fellow in the world."

"You are very good, Lord Herbert, very kind—may you find all those whom you love deserving of your confidence"—

At that moment, Sir Charles approached them; he whispered to Lord Herbert, and the latter immediately rose, took his arm, and they walked out of the room together."

## CHAPTER X.

## JEALOUSY.

These lines I write not to remove  
 United souls from serious love:  
 The best attempts by mortals made  
 Reflect on things which quickly fade;  
 Yet never will I men persuade  
 To leave affections, where may shine  
 Impressions of the love divine.

SIR JOHN BRAUMONT.

SIR Charles Lennard's whisper had poured poison into the ear of Lady Herbert, and overcast the gleam of sunshine in which she temporarily basked; but she had replied to his information with a calm dignity which, for the time, repelled his projects, and made him shrink within himself.

"You are," he said, "invulnerable to all that sways your sex, and did I not know that your affections are awake for one happy person, I should suppose that you were incased in ice."

"Pardon me," she said to him, "I am neither cold nor indifferent, and few things give me a greater sense of depression than the knowledge of existing crime; except the knowledge, that as far as regards *this* world, providing guilt escapes detection, it does not seem to affect happiness;—but I never am obliged to any one who tells me a scandalous story. On the contrary, I cannot avoid feeling as though they placed a dark veil over me, I like to believe every body true, every body kind, every body pure; the melancholy conviction which time forces upon me that it is otherwise, is never a welcome truth, but the reverse." Sir Charles Lennard was silenced.

The next day, Lady Herbert and her daughter were in the Zoological Gardens, accompanied by Lord de Montmorenci and Sir Charles; they went by appointment to meet Lord Herbert and Miss Clermont, but they looked for them in vain. All the avenues were searched;—they paused at the prison-house of the wretched animals—they retraced.

steps, and then they sat down at last on the highest part of the grounds, by Sir Charles Lennard's advice, who declared the only way to meet in a crowd with any person was to remain fixed in a particular spot. Miss Herbert sat next Lord de Montmorenci; she said two or three words which made him think that some fresh circumstance had occurred to give Lady Herbert pain.

"I will tell you every thing," she said, "the first opportunity; it is right you should know all; it is right that you should watch over our interests; we have no friend but you."

At that moment, the Lanti appeared, as usual, surrounded by her tail of black and yellow imps. She immediately came up and addressed Lady Herbert, inquired for Lord Herbert the *dear* Lord as she impudently called him, whom she had not seen for so long a time! And Sir Charles, too, she expressed her surprise at his not having been at her *soirées musicales*, at which she said lady this, and duchess the other had been present, and all the fine London world. She regretted that Lady Herbert had not done her that honour, and, casting a few speaking glances at Sir Charles, she leant forward and said in Lady Herbert's ear, but loud enough to be overheard, that she wished her joy of her daughter's marriage with the *Preux*.

Both Lord de Montmorenci, and Miss Herbert heard what she said. Both were offended at her insolence, and Lady Herbert checked it by making her a bow; and rising, took Sir Charles's arm and walked away. Lord de Montmorenci could not avoid doing the same to his companion, and they continued to go up one path and down another, searching for Lord Herbert, but without success, till at length they again passed the Lanti.

"Are you still looking for milord?" she asked in a loud impertinent tone. "He has this moment driven off with a very pretty young lady—I saw them get into his cabriolet—they went that way," pointing to the left.

"Is it not strange," said Sir Charles Lennard, "that we never should have seen them?—They must have seen us."

Lady Herbert knew not what to think: she tried to seem careless, and replied, "It is very possible, in the confusion of the crowd, to miss those we are looking for;" and then she tried to compose her own spirits, by recollecting that the Lanti, at least, was not the object of her husband's at-

tentions, and how consolatory it was that he should take pleasure in the society of so artless and good a girl as her *own* cousin, one whom they had mutually protected and fostered as though she had been a second daughter. Yet still jealous fears of she knew not what distracted her. Jealousy is perhaps never more actively tormenting, than when it has no object whereon to fix suspicion; it is the restless demon which hurls its victim from one degree of suffering to another, till every thing and every person takes a hue from the sickly thought of the diseased mind.—Yes! certainty is preferable to suspense—the intense anguish of a jealousy which has ascertained its object, finds some satisfaction in knowing that *there* is the being, *there* is the cause of its justifiable wretchedness; and, under this impression, evil minds seek their consolation in revenge: whilst the good derive theirs from a better source—resignation to the will of a divine though chastening hand, knowing that they are not to choose their trials, but to bear them.

While Lady Herbert conversed with Sir Charles, Lord de Montmorenci was an anxious observer of them. He knew well the character of the former, he knew the power he could exercise over the minds of those whom it was his interest or his pleasure to subdue, and though he had for years watched over Lady Herbert's pure and undefiled character, yet he thought at last in the infirmity of human nature, in the neglect of her husband, in the artful, insinuating demeanour of Sir Charles, even *her* virtue may be scathed. He shuddered as he thought of this possibility, and as he was swayed by this fear, he answered or spoke to Sir Charles in a tone of displeasure and almost defiance, which the demeanour of the latter towards him by no means justified.

“What is the matter with you, Lord de Montmorenci?” asked Miss Herbert, in a voice of terror, “you are not like yourself!”

“Pardon me, I beseech you, if I seem strange; I cannot have been so long an inmate of your family, or have so long held the title of your guardian, without feeling an interest in you all, which makes me dread the consequences if what you say respecting your father be true; and, under this painful impression, I may have appeared harsh in my manner to Sir Charles; but, consider the nature of the circum-

stances you have confided to me, and judge if it be possible that I can quite command myself."

The carriage now drew up which was to convey Lady Herbert and her daughter home, and they entered it with very different feelings from those with which they had arrived at the garden.

Miss Clermont met Lady Herbert as she was ascending the stairs of Herbert House.

"Lord Herbert has been so uneasy about you both," she said. "Your absence took away all the pleasure we had in the Zoological Gardens. Why did you not come there?"

"Why did you not wait for us there, Anna?" rejoined Miss Herbert. "We have been walking and watching for papa and you these two hours. What can you have been about?"

"How strange!" rejoined Miss Clermont; "we have just been doing the same for you; Lord Herbert was quite hurt at your non-appearance."

Lady Herbert said nothing, but went straight to her room—complained of being wearied—desired not to be disturbed till she should ring her bell—and sat down amazed and perplexed, her suspicions all afloat—her tenderness reproaching her for entertaining them—her mind a chaos. The dinner hour arrived; she was informed by her maid that it was time she should change her toilet; she did so mechanically; she was asked what gown she would wear; "Any one," was the reply. Her maid then opened the door of her wardrobe; she pointed to a dress, and said she would wear that one. The bell to announce the dinner being on the table, and a knock at her door at the same moment by a servant, to say Lord Herbert waited, made her hurry on her robe, without giving it a moment's thought. As her hair was very long and thick, some minutes elapsed in putting the comb through it, and, twisting it round her brows, she fastened it with the first thing that came to hand, and, without looking in the glass, ran hastily to the dining-room. The first object which met her view and recalled her senses to the present moment, was Miss Clermont sitting in the chair she usually occupied. The latter, however, rose at her approach, and made an apology for having taken that place, saying,

"Lord Herbert had desired her to help the soup."

"How are you, love?" Lady Herbert asked her husband,



at the same time sitting down in the chair next to him, which Miss Clermont had just vacated; "and why did we not see you to-day at the gardens?"

"I cannot conceive how we missed you; but I think it must have been," he replied, "owing to my having gone into the den of the wild beasts to see them fed; and after that Miss Clermont was rather sick and overcome, so I walked her away to Lord Hertford's villa, and obtained permission to saunter in his grounds. Then we went back again to look for you, and thus I conclude we missed you. But there was such a crowd in the gardens to-day, and it was so very hot and dusty, and I must add, disagreeable, that I was quite sorry to have chosen so unpropitious a time for our visit. But Mabel, for whom are you in such deep mourning?"

Lady Herbert looked at her attire, and saw that she had inadvertently clothed herself in black; she started—tried to smile—told her husband how the mistake had occurred—and, though she had a spice of superstition lurking in her fancy, she laughed, however little inclined to laugh, and observed,

"I must have put on these sable weeds for my misdeeds. Was there ever any thing so extraordinary?"

Lady Herbert endeavoured to make light of the accident; but, do what she could, something of a superstitious dread came over her, and she thought, "There are times when we receive warnings, and this is, perhaps, intended to be a warning to me that my days are numbered."

A gloom seemed to envelop the little party; and though, she tried to rally her spirits, the effort was ineffectual. Before they had finished dinner, a knock at the door announced a visiter.

"Who can it be," they asked one of another, at this unusual hour?" but before they had time to form conjectures Frederick Clermont was in the room.

"What an unexpected pleasure!" exclaimed Miss Herbert, starting up and running to welcome him. "Anna, had you any idea he was to be here to-day?"

"Not the slightest. But I hope, dear Fred, you are quite well;" and she embraced her brother.

Nothing could be more kind than Lord and Lady Herbert were to their *protégée*, and he sat down at their board as though it had been his paternal home. A thousand questions were asked—a thousand expressions of admiration at

his bravery escaped from Lady Herbert and her daughter, to which he replied by saying,

"Oh! you will turn my head, and make me fancy I have achieved wonders, when, in fact, I have only done a seaman's duty."

Lord Herbert was not devoid of affection or of warmth of heart; and the dissipations into which he plunged, although they rendered many duties irksome and many blessings tasteless, had not deadened his feelings towards the youth whom he had always regarded as a young brother.

"Would that I had had a son like you, Fred!" he had often said; and, in the unreasonableness of his lawless wishes, he disliked his wife for not having borne him a male heir; but this he had never expressed to him, and Mr. Clermont felt only that he was loved by Lord Herbert, and appreciated the brotherly affection he ever had shown him.

"For how long is your leave of absence?" he asked.

"A short month," was the reply.

"Well, we must make the most of it while it is ours. Your room is always ready for you, Fred, and the oftener you occupy it the better we shall be pleased. Will you not join with me, Mabel, in these expressions of welcome to our young friend?"

"That I will; Clermont knows I regard him with all the esteem and affection he merits. I cannot say more."

That evening was passed in happiness, and Lady Herbert had accustomed herself not to look beyond the present moment. It is surprising how the circle of happiness contracts itself with advancing years; but does the heart become in proportion narrowed in its affections? Oh no!—not always—not necessarily so—only more concentrated—more fixed in its aim—more bound to the few for whom and in whom alone it lives.

"How you are grown, Clermont!" said Miss Herbert; "once we were of the same height, but now you are a head and more taller;" and, as she looked at him, she could not avoid giving him one of those glances which the young interchange, of innocent admiration.

He was above the middle height, slender, but muscular in figure, his countenance beaming with the genuine expression of those virtues which were peculiarly his own—honour, truth, affection. His brow was still white as the unsunned snows; the rest of his countenance browned by

exposure to the weather. Altogether, he was the very impersonation of a sailor; but not without the polish of society, and that gentleness of voice and manner which are so winning to woman.

Sarah Herbert did not repress the sentiment of admiration he inspired her with, and openly testified to him, by her conversation and behaviour, that she thought him charming. It might have appeared strange, to one not versed in the heart's mysteries, that he did not appear elated by her kindness, but the reverse. In fact, the very openness of her unembarrassed demeanour and expressions of friendly attachment, were death to his hopes. If such were his feelings in regard to Miss Herbert, on the part of his sister, he was conscious of a change which wounded him deeply. She either was, or he fancied she was, totally indifferent, and that her behaviour towards him was marked with a coldness he could in nowise account for. When the family circle broke up for the night, Miss Clermont remained in the drawing-room to arrange the music-books, which had lain scattered about, and Lord Herbert had taken up a newspaper, in the perusal of which he seemed deeply interested. When Miss Clermont had finished her task, she approached Lord Herbert's chair, saying,

"I am aware I ought to have expressed my gratitude for your great kindness to my brother; but our debt of gratitude to yourself and Lady Herbert is too vast to be repaid by words. Long years of proof are the only means by which we can hope to render ourselves worthy of your protection and goodness. But we both estimate the value of your friendship as it deserves;" and she held out her hand to him, which he accepted and kissed.

Be it remembered, Miss Clermont was not a governess, neither was she of ruder blood than her benefactor, for she was of Lady Herbert's own near kindred, therefore, she esteemed it no disrespect thus to offer her hand to her protector—but she alone knew the pleasure it gave her to feel her hand pressed and kissed by Lord Herbert.

"Indeed," said the latter, "you distress me by dwelling on the word 'gratitude;' our benefits are quite mutual; have you not been of the greatest advantage in a thousand ways to Sarah? and besides you are our relation. Pray never repeat that word to me; it grates harshly on my ear from your lips,—I assure you it does."

Miss Clermont lifted her eyes to his, and smiled an angelic smile; although the sentiment which gave it birth could not claim kindred with that heavenly semblance, nevertheless the smile pleased Lord Herbert.

"I never knew before," he said, "how handsome you are."

Miss Clermont made no reply, but, wishing him good night, courtesied and withdrew. Shortly after she reached her room, her brother knocked at her door—she bade him enter.

"Sister, I could not sleep, till I had learnt from yourself the cause of your strange reception of me. Anna, what have I done to offend you?"

"To offend *me*, Frederick?" and she started. "Nothing, why do you ask me such an odd question?"

"Why? why, because your reception of me is so unlike what it ever was previously."

"Nay, Fred, dear, this is quite a fancy. You know you are my first object in life, and if I have appeared cold, it was merely that I was so surprised," and she kissed her brother's forehead, as she bade him dismiss such an unjust suspicion.

"Well, Anna, I hope *it is as you say*; but we sailors know pretty well by the aspect of the atmosphere, what weather to expect, and I do assure you, whether you were conscious of the fact or not, that your atmosphere was any thing but a warm one. But answer me, Anna, are they—are the Herberts, I mean—as kind to you as ever? Remember, if they are not, you shall not be subject to their control. Was it any doubt you entertained of their reception of *me* which *made* you afraid to see me arrive unexpectedly? What was it in short which influenced your behaviour? for I am certain, Anna, that something or other has occasioned you to behave towards me as you never have done till now."

Miss Clermont denied that she had any feeling of coldness to her brother, and assured him that his suspicions were wholly unfounded; attributed her manner to the surprise his sudden appearance had excited; and, in short, he was obliged to accept her assurances with a semblance of conviction which nevertheless he did not feel. How often are we obliged to accept the counterfeit ore for the true in every department and on every occasion in life!



LOVE.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE LAUNCH.

Go view the splendid domes of Greenwich. Go,  
And own what raptures from reflection flow.  
Hail! noblest structures imaged in the wave,  
A nation's grateful tribute to the brave.  
Hail blest retreat from war and shipwreck, hail!  
That oft arrest the wondering stranger's sail.

ROGERS'S POEMS.

"THAT will be delightful," said Miss Herbert, when it was proposed one day by Frederick Clermont to go to Greenwich, to see a ship launched; and the other members of the family joining in the wish, it was agreed the party should take place. Frederick Clermont had a particular interest in the event, as his friend, Captain Danesford, was to be appointed to the command of the *Zephyr*, and he could not help entertaining a wish that his friend and his sister should become acquainted. "How pleased," he thought, "should I be if they sailed the voyage of life together!" He commended his friend warmly to Miss Clermont, and had often praised his sister to his friend, as they walked the deck together, and conversed of those far away, when absence, like death, beautifies the virtues and charms of those we love, conceals their imperfections, and shows only the bright side of their character. Frederick's description of his sister, had sunk into the fancy of the young sailor, and his heart was prepared to kindle at her view.

As the party drove along the crowded road to Greenwich, which is, in fact, a suburb, the whole way, of the vast city of London, Lady Herbert observed to Lord de Montmorenci that to her fancy there was a feeling almost of awe in the hum and bustle of the myriads of souls, who, at all hours, plied their various pursuits and concerns, whether of commerce, of business, or of pleasure, along that road teeming with human life.

"What are they here? What will they be hereafter?" she said, "it is impossible not to ask one-self the question, and equally impossible to answer it; but similar crowds always incline me to be reflective, not thoughtless, or gay."

Her companion replied, "I also share that feeling. Lady Herbert, but the saddest thought which occurs to me on finding myself one in the midst of a multitude is, that no one cares whether I am dead or alive."

"Ah!" replied Lady Herbert, with an expression of exultation irradiating her countenance, "that is a feeling in which I cannot for a moment share—I am a wife and a mother."

"True, Lady Herbert, there are always some secret recesses of feeling, into which not even our friends can penetrate. *You* cannot understand me. I forgot for a moment to whom I was speaking—pardon me."

The profound expression of melancholy which she saw depicted on Lord de Montmorenci's countenance, made her for a time silent.

"Yes," she thought, it must be so—the story of his having been engaged to a young person who died, is certainly true; poor Lord de Montmorenci, how I compassionate him!"

Miss Herbert and Frederick Clermont were laughing and talking loudly and rapidly with the gay bright voices of hope and youth, and they had not overheard, as they sat back in the barouche, the conversation of their companions. Frederick Clermont thought, as he was once more in joyous communion with Sarah Herbert,

"Yes, she is the same innocent open-hearted natural creature she ever was as a child; but so beautiful, *sa far above me*, I cannot hope—I dare not hope to obtain such a prize."

Yet, all the while he *said*, I dare not, I *cannot*, he *did* hope; for love is sometimes bold. The crowd now increased every moment; and, at length, such a mass of carts and carriages of every description were drawn up on each side of the road, that, finding it impossible to drive on, Lord Herbert handed Miss Clermont from his cabriolet, and proposed to Lady Herbert that they should proceed on foot. Frederick Clermont assured them it would be quite easy to walk, for that they could go a back way, to the house where he had prepared places for them to see the launch. Lady Herbert liked the proposal, got out of the carriage, and leant upon her husband's arm, while Miss Clermont took the other.

"Take care of Sarah, Fred," cried Lord Herbert; but she had already placed herself under Lord de Montmo-

renci's protection; and Mr. Clermont replied good-humouredly, he thought he could be of more use acting as pioneer: so he ran on before, and conducted them to the house which had been taken for them to see the sight. It was a beautiful bright day,—such a day as one makes a pet of in England; shining sunbeams, balmy airs, and if a cloud now and then crosses the face of the heavens, it was only to render the succeeding moment more dazzling. An immense concourse of persons were assembled, clad in every variety of colour, and the crowd waved to and fro like a field of corn whose undulations were beautifully marked out in light and shadow, forming one vast mass of living sentient beings, all assembled for one purpose, and the same interest inspiring them on the occasion. Of how great power are the united feelings of a multitude! It is fearful to think what a unanimous sentiment collected numbers may effect. If well directed, it is a power from Heaven; but if ill, it is the most tremendous instrument of Providence to chastise the sins of his creatures.

In expressing this thought, Lord de Montmorenci added, “Fortunately, the multitude, after all, are generally under the control of the few—for a simultaneous movement of feeling is frequently but an impulse of short and uncertain duration; it may be excited by a good or evil motive—who can trust it?—whereas, a master mind acts upon principle, and fortunately commands a more durable obedience.”

“I do not wonder that a man should give himself up to politics,” said Lady Herbert, in reply; “taken in its enlarged sense, it is surely the noblest career he can pursue, to be the ruler of the nation—of his own nation; to defend its rights, to sacrifice fortune, life, liberty to the cause, is not too vast a sacrifice.”

This approval, from Lady Herbert, of his own sentiments and favourite pursuit, imparted a satisfaction to Lord de Montmorenci, which showed itself in his countenance; but he turned the conversation, and made no direct reply.

There was now a solemn silence in that immense crowd; not a sound, save driving the ship from the stocks, was to be heard, where previously the voices of thousands had been raised in ever-varying tones expressive of the interest they felt. The deck of the *Zephyr* was crowded with people; the sailors stood ready to break the wine upon her bows. Some persons have found fault with the custom as irreverend; but why so? Its inanimate timbers are destined to

contain many souls. The christening of a vessel is a type of *their* spiritual baptism; it may remind the spectators that, as the ship is launched into the waters of the ocean, so they have been launched into the fountain of living waters; and that the work of men's hands, one of the most noble of mortal creations, ought to be blessed by holy thoughts and prayer, to fence it round from the dangers through which it is to pass. With the generality of persons, all similar customs are considered as matters of ceremony or superstitious usance; but to the reflective, they speak a different language, and are otherwise regarded. All the nautical judges present admired the shape of the vessel—her construction—her symmetry; would she make a good launch?—would she receive no injury in her first trial of the waters? Every body was eager; expectation was at its greatest height; the hammers redoubled their work; the silence of the spectators became more silent still; the workmen drew back; the Zephyr rushed down her first course; a thousand voices greeted her; a thousand hats were thrown up in the air; a thousand demonstrations of kind wishes for the fate of the good ship Zephyr resounded far and wide. But the last effort to free her from earth was still to be made; the men resumed their labour; ten minutes more of anxiety, and the Zephyr flew, like a thing instinct with life, towards her rightful element. She rushed once again still more impetuously forward, and, with the swiftness of an arrow, took possession of her liquid throne. She reeled for a moment, and shivered in the embrace of the waters—then sat like a queen in her state, and every British heart echoed the national cry of "Rule Britannia."

The Herberts were now conducted to Captain Danesford's lodgings, where refreshments had been prepared for the party. Frederick Clermont was proud of his friend, and his friend was proud of him. Lady Herbert and Sarah Herbert, were admired and duly honoured; but he had worked his fancy up to think that there was nothing which would interest *him* equal to Miss Clermont; and the consequence was, that he felt that love at first sight which is so ridiculed by the reasoner and the cold denizens of existence, but which, nevertheless, does exist, and is compatible with truth and nature. Without returning any answering sentiment, Miss Clermont was pleased at the effect she produced; hitherto, although many persons had admired, and many courted her as the favourite protégée of Lord



and Lady Herbert, she had never been conscious of having made one conquest; and, notwithstanding this one was not such as she might have wished it to be, it was grateful to her at the moment, and Miss Clermont bestowed upon her admirer every encouragement she could, without compromising her liberty, or giving rise to animadversions on her character. A guarded woman, such as Miss Clermont was by principle and by calculation, has it always in her power to conduct herself in such a manner as to ensnare the heart she means to play with for her own purposes of vanity or advantage, without forfeiting her liberty. It is only the tender, the feeble, and the single-minded woman who becomes herself the ensnared, and perhaps the victim, of her generous frankness. Most certain it is, that the least amiable of the sex fare the best in *this world*. Who is it that tyrannizes over a man long after he has ceased to love? Who is that commands the wealth, the support, the homage of the most distinguished in life's circle? from the time of Aspasia downwards, who! —the bold, the intriguing, the cold in heart!

From that day, Captain Danesford was the devoted slave of Miss Clermont. She knew it well, but she continued to ward off his proposal of marriage, by sometimes inducing him to believe her affections were engaged, and at last she even made a half confidence to him on the subject, under promise of his not breathing a word of it to her brother. This was an effectual bar to his advancing farther in his suit, and from having been the most gay and open mannered person, he became silent and timid in her society, and would sit at the farthest extremity of the room, apart from the company. Lord Herbert frequently joked with her on having made a complete metamorphosis of the unfortunate man, as he designated Captain Danesford, and whispered in her ear—

“Why so pale, fond lover?  
Prithee, why so pale?  
If looking well won't please her,  
Will looking ill prevail?”

“Do sing me that pretty playful air,” he added aloud, and Miss Clermont obeyed. She saw her victim writhing under the sting, and saw with quiet pleasure, that it was even so. There were several uses to which she proposed to put him, and which she knew a rejection of his hand, once of-

ferred, must necessarily prevent; this she very ingeniously avoided, and, as time went on, and her brother's leave of absence expired, she saw that she could with impunity carry on the same system of coquetry. The day before Mr. Clermont was to leave Herbert House, he was alone with Sarah Herbert. She had been peculiarly kind to him during his stay in town; she had been to him as a sister; but yet that kindly affection was what was most galling to him, for it precluded all hope of obtaining the love to which he aspired. He had questioned himself as to the nature of his feelings for her: he was no longer a stranger to them, and he was conscious that it was in vain to expect a return.

He asked himself, "Even if I could have obtained a dearer interest in her heart, should I have been justified in so doing; could her parents approve my suit? No! Frederick Clermont, a plain gentleman, with his profession only to look to, is that an alliance for the beautiful Sarah Herbert? It is madness to think of it;" and he determined to take leave of her without betraying the real state of his feelings. Yet, when the moment came, he forgot every thing but his love.

"Miss Herbert," he said, "you have been very kind to me, and I ought to express my grateful thanks; but I have no words to do so. I only ask you to believe that I would live or die for you. Do you believe this, Miss Herbert?" and he gazed upon her face which was flushed with a consciousness of his meaning.

"I do not like to think *that*, Mr. Clermont; but," she said, speaking cheerfully and shaking off the serious impression he had made, "I hope you will not die for any body, but live for some good and pretty person who will be worthy of you."

The wishes we form for others, are seldom those which they form for themselves; and, in the present case, nothing could be less in unison with his own, than those Miss Herbert expressed for him.

"I have only one favour to ask—will you give me one of those tresses which have escaped from the profusion of your hair? Nay, do not hesitate, I conjure you! I shall attach no other meaning to the gift, than that of kind goodwill; but, when I die, that guerdon shall be found on my heart, and, while I live, it will instigate me to every noble action,"

"Certainly, dear Mr. Clermont, I will comply with your wish, although I beg to add I trust this worthless gift (and she severed her lock of hair) may be replaced by one much more deserving of being prized by you."

"Again, Miss Herbert, I implore you not to fear that I shall attach a wrong sentiment to your kindness. May Heaven bless you with its choicest blessings. I trust you will yet hear of me, and that I may be enabled to do some glorious deed before I close my career;—but I pain you—forgive me. Farewell!" He kissed her hand and was gone.

It is hard when the first homage of the heart conveys no rapture to the person who receives it, but, on the contrary, that it should give them pain. There is something withering in the idea of a blight on the young affections—in the moral as in the natural world the nipping of its early blossoms is peculiarly melancholy. Miss Herbert felt this, and felt it with a depth of feeling which made her ask herself, "What if his fate should be my own?"

Whatever might be the compassionate regret endured by Miss Herbert at her young cousin's departure, it excited but one sentiment now in his sister's breast, a rejoicing to think he was no longer present to remark upon her actions. The evening of his departure, Miss Clermont sat conversing with Captain Danesford, and affected to think that although she had lost much in losing her brother's society, it was far better for him that he should have been obliged to depart.

"Poor Fred!" she added, "he has lost his heart before he knew he had one, and, in such an unfortunate quarter, that he never could hope his suit should be successful."

"Then is he most truly to be pitied; for though I have been all my life at sea, and away from the temptations which he has been exposed to, I have nevertheless discovered, that in a very short time love will make ravages which years cannot repair."

Miss Clermont affected to laugh, and declared that men did not know the meaning of love: here to-day, there to-morrow; she said in every port a sailor finds a new object to dissipate his sorrows, and to efface the remembrance of every thing which had given him pain.

Captain Danesford warmly refuted this allegation, and ended by saying "there was nothing which a seaman would not do for the mistress of his affections. *Try me, Miss Clermont,*" he added, and thus disclosed that she was the *object of his fondest vows*,

Again she smiled, and said playfully,

"Nay, not so; *I* have no right to command your services; but there is a secret I want to find out—it is one which concerns the friend I most love in the world—and, as her happiness depends upon the truth or falsehood of the report I have heard, I am anxious to have the matter ascertained. If, as I hope, the story is a fabrication, why, then, to be assured it is the mere contrivance of malevolence, will give *me* happiness by knowing that my friend is secure; but if, as I sometimes fear, it should prove true,—in that case, it will be my part to ward off from her the dreadful knowledge of her husband's delinquency till such time as he repents, and is restored, as he must be, to her ultimately, whenever the fumes of so unworthy an inebriation shall have passed off."

Miss Clermont paused, and looked timidly in Captain Danesford's countenance. She read there a mixed expression of interest, and yet astonishment, at her imparting such a secret to him, and said, quickly,

"I do not wonder that you are surprised I should mention such a topic to you; but, if you only knew of how much consequence it is, not only to Lady Herbert, but to her daughter, that I should be made aware of the truth or falsehood of the report, you would cease to marvel that I should have spoken to you on such a subject. But what have I said? In a moment of inadvertency I have made known to you the names of the persons implicated in this unfortunate business. It is not surprising that I have betrayed more than I intended, for I am altogether wretched and confused; but, Captain Danesford, I appeal to you—nay, I do more—I trust to your honour, never to mention the confidence I am about to repose in you. It has come to my ears that the Signora Lanti is the mistress of Lord Herbert—that he is lavishing his fortune upon her—and that her avarice is insatiable. He has already given her his wife's most valuable jewels; that fact, alas! I know beyond a doubt; but still I hoped that vanity and love of display might have tempted him to forego right principle, but did not believe that his heart was devoted to that worthless woman, who cares not for him, only for his money. Now, I am told that every evening, when she is not engaged to sing in public, he passes his time with her, either going to some of the minor theatres, or giving suppers at a villa he has taken for her, called the Hermitage, in the

neighbourhood of the Regent's Park. Now, what I want you to do is, to ascertain the real truth of these reports, for I have good reason to suspect Lord Herbert is striving to make himself master of every shilling of his wife's fortune, in order to go off with the Lanti. Think how terrible a catastrophe this would be. He has one friend, one real friend, who might yet save him, could that person but know the truth. As you value my peace, then, Captain Danesford, which is wrapped up in that of dear Lady Herbert, I implore you to lose no time in ascertaining the extent and duration of this disgraceful infatuation.

"I am indeed shocked," he replied, "to think that under the semblance of so much happiness, so much domestic virtue, there should be such cause for misery, such a threatening of ruin and desolation. But I will at least clear away your doubts, and endeavour to discover the truth."

"I shall for ever be obliged to you," replied Miss Clermont, and Lady Herbert coming at that moment into the room, all farther discourse was prevented on the subject.

As soon as Captain Danesford was alone, he began to consider the nature of the promise which he had been inadvertently drawn in to make. What! become a spy on another man's actions, and go about secretly watching the affairs and prying into the behaviour of others! impossible! Anna Clermont was not aware, he thought, when she requested me to do this thing, that it must be necessarily effected by fraud and cunning, and is unworthy of any honourable man. She did not consider or reflect upon the consequences to me of fulfilling her request; but I must explain the matter to her, and Miss Clermont will never wish to make me act so dishonourably. Having thus settled the matter in his own mind, he came the next morning to seek an interview with Miss Clermont, but some days elapsed and no opportunity presented itself for him to speak for a moment to her alone.

It chanced one evening, as Captain Danesford was passing through Hanover Square, that there was a riot among the coachmen at the door of the Concert Rooms, and he had some difficulty in proceeding along the pavement, when his attention was attracted to a carriage two or three ranks deep, which another seemed to be driving against purpose, notwithstanding the screams of the lady within, and various strange Italian oaths, ejaculated from several black heads which were now and then to be seen vociferating

through the windows. After a clamour which admitted not of ascertaining the rights of the cause, there was a great crash, several voices vociferating, "Shame! Shame!" Captain Danesford waited to hear no more, but, with the agility of a sailor, climbed over the roofs of the intervening carriages, and at some peril to himself, contrived to rescue an unfortunate lady from imminent danger. Two gentlemen who were in attendance upon her, but who had not been of the least use,—now, when the danger was over, cried out mainly, and gesticulated so violently, that the coachmen, who had been all quarrelling among themselves, burst into one roar of laughter at the unfortunate Italians.

The Lanti, for it was she who expressed her thanks in broken English, and bad French, and beautiful Italian alternately,

"You do see, *saar*," the Lanti began speaking, "I was going to the concert *avec ses messieurs*, et notre cocher a voulu dépasser *oune* autre. He would not be passed trou, and ecco il cominciamento di tutto il desastro." Then she went on to detail the whole story, and finished by giving him an invitation to go home and sup with her at "de Hermitage."

Ah, ha! he thought, this is curious enough; the opportunity which presents itself thus naturally to oblige Anna Clermont I may avail myself of without any breach of honour; and he proceeded with the Italians, to partake of their entertainment.

Arrived at the villa, he found several gentlemen there, among them Sir Charles Lennard, and one other lady, another singer, whom the Lanti presented to him as a person who ought to be worshipped, "for," she said, "she will very soon sing better than I do."

"Ah! *mia cara*," cried the obsequious damsel, and she looked like her trade, all impudence and mock humility.

The supper was good, and so were the songs. In the midst of the entertainment, Lord Herbert was announced. He came in as though he were the master of the establishment, and talked familiarly with the various persons who composed the society; when, on beholding Captain Danesford, he looked confused, bowed to him, but assumed a totally different manner, and whispered in the Lanti's ear.

She answered aloud in French, declaring that if it had not been for that brave *capitaine*, she should have been killed; and summed up all by declaring, she never would

go in his lordship's carriage again till he sent away his coachman and procured another.

"If the Lanti can get him to do that," said Sir Charles Lennard, speaking low to Captain Danesford, "she will prove herself to be a great favourite indeed."

While she continued to complain to Lord Herbert, he bowed, looked more confused than before, and turned over some music that lay on the pianoforte, requesting the other lady present to sing, and, making her hyperbolic compliments on her voice and taste, till the Lanti, whose choler had been gradually rising, at hearing her rival thus commended, was at last no longer to be controlled, and there was no epithet of abuse she did not bestow upon Mademoiselle Laure. The latter, whose bread depended on the Lanti, did and said every thing in her power to mollify the infuriated Signora,—but all would not do: a general confusion took place, the Englishmen laughing more and more loudly, the rival singers screaming in the harsh tones of their Italian voices, (and none are more discordant when under the influence of passion,) till at length a general rush was made out of the house by all the guests, and the Lanti was left alone with her rage, to vent it as best she might.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### THE DECLARATION.

The earth, late choked with showers,  
Is now array'd in green;  
Her bosom springs with flowers,  
The air dissolves her teen;  
The heavens laugh at her glory,  
Yet bide I sad and sorry!

The woods are deck'd with leaves,  
And trees are clothed gay,  
And Flora, crown'd with sheaves,  
With oaken boughs doth play;  
Where I am clad in black,  
The token of my wrack.

The birds upon the trees  
 Do sing with pleasant voices;  
 And chant in their degrees  
 Their loves and lucky choices;  
 When I, whilst they are singing,  
 With sighs my arms am wringing.

The thrushes seek the shade,  
 And I my fatal grave;  
 Their flight to heaven is made,  
 My walk on earth I have:  
 They free, I thrall: they jolly,  
 I sad and pensive wholly.

THOMAS LODGE.

It was one of those fine days in spring when every person who is not dead to the call of nature, and who has ever loved the country, feels it almost sinful wilfully to slight its innocent charms, and be pent up within the city's walls; some prisoned birds reminds them of the free choristers who are singing their hymns of love and joy in mid-heaven, or carolling among their leafy haunts in the plenitude of their joys. Some vender of flowers, whose beauty and whose fragrance are to be exhaled, and spent in a hot and crowded apartment, brings to their recollection those perfumed atmospheres of a beautiful garden where their charms are not so evanescent, and their odour is more grateful; and the heart, weary of factitious pleasures, turns, with longing fondness, to scenes of nature, and the wholesome freshness of the pure country air.

Lady Herbert, more than almost any one, deeply felt this longing desire to leave every thing that was not good and pure, and fresh and fair, and refit, as she called it, by a total change of scene. Still she had not courage to tear herself away from the place where her husband resided, and hitherto she had even resisted her daughter's entreaties to make an excursion for a few days into the country; but this day Sarah Herbert had pleaded so forcibly, and had even declared herself to be so languid and unwell, that her mother's fears were roused, and she blamed herself for not having sooner listened to her solicitations. Lady Herbert, therefore, said to Lord Herbert, when he came to pay her a short visit before he disappeared for the day,

"I think, love, our Sarah requires change of air and scene, and I propose taking her, if you have no objection,



to Lord de Montmorenci's villa near Windsor: he has kindly offered us his house."

"Oh, if the young lady requires the country, perhaps you had better go at once to Moreton Park; but I thought you proposed presenting her this year."

"For that very reason, dearest, it seems to me that a little fresh air will strengthen her for the fatigue of gaiety, and were we to go to Moreton Park, we should be so far from you." And she looked at him fondly, while the tears filled her eyes.

"Nonsense, Mabel; women always like novelty. Pray go to De Montmorenci's villa, if you prefer it."

"Certainly I will not, if you have the least objection to our doing so."

"Objection! What objection can I have? You know, Mabel, I have never objected to any thing *you* proposed."

Had this been said kindly, in a tone, and with a manner that implied no other sentiment than the meaning which the words expressed, it would have been accepted by Lady Herbert, and gratefully acknowledged; but it was, on the contrary, pronounced in such a voice and manner, as changed its import to the gall of irony. Had his wife consulted her own inclinations only, she would have checked the feeling which for a moment had made her wish for a change of scene, and, as she had done upon every other occasion, would have sacrificed her wishes to his will; but, to the fondness and faith of a martyr in love, she united an affection for her child which only required the passion of the wife to make it a rival sentiment in her heart, and she was too well accustomed now to see her husband cross and unreasonable, not to be aware that when the momentary fit of tyranny went off, it would be indifferent to him whether she went to the country, or remained where she was: Lady Herbert determined, therefore, to take his words in the sense in which they were spoken, and replied,

"Very well; Sarah and I will drive down to Windsor this afternoon."

"Pray drive wherever you like, so as I am not obliged to drive after you;" and he left the room humming an air.

"Well, mamma, what news?" cried Miss Herbert, running in from an opposite door. "What does papa say? Has he given his consent to our going to the country?"

Lady Herbert replied, "Yes, love; but I do not think he likes parting with us."

"Her daughter saw the tear on her mother's cheek. She knew that that was the turn Lady Herbert gave the assent, but that the true cause of her depression was her father's ill temper and carelessness. She made no allusion, however, to this, and pressing her mother in her arms, only said,

"You are the best and dearest of mammas! It will do us both good to pass a few days in the country."

As they drove from London to Windsor, Miss Herbert observed that the scenery frequently resembled Rubens's landscapes, and she thought she could produce the effects of that master's pencil, did she possess the manual power of painting.

Lady Herbert failed not to encourage her child in this love of nature, this appreciation of its features, and of the beauties of landscape; for she well knew that such resources are the only ones from which delight may safely be expected, and that the more these are cultivated, the more is independence substantiated, the more we live above the world and all its petty turmoils. These self-resources will not always confer happiness, but they are often great and effective barriers against utter wretchedness. Both Lady Herbert and her daughter admired the variety of rich and undulating country, occasionally intermingled with the roughness of heaths and ploughed land, while the white clouds formed a mountain back-ground to the picture, and relieved the landscape from insipidity. Oh! the joyous throbbing of Sarah Herbert's breast; life to her was young as the season; the softness of the air, the absence of noise and smoke, the feeling of liberty inspired by the country, awoke an indefinite rapture in her whole being, not the less inebriating that it was indefinite. No withering experiences checked the innocent play of her fancy; no chilling fears for the future extinguished her glow of delight at the present. She gave the reins to that enjoyment, which is the peculiar privilege of the spring time of life. She was satisfied to be.

When they arrived after their pleasant drive at Fairfield, they found every thing prepared for them, and a note from Lord de Montmorenci, saying how much he regretted not being able to receive them in person, but hoping they would command his servants as if they were at home.

Fairfield was not a cottage nor a palace, but a comfortable English house of the olden time—high narrow windows with window-seats, wide staircases, oaken floors, thick

walls, armorial bearings over most of the chimney-pieces, one long gallery containing the portraits of the De Montmorenci's, and several indifferently-painted pictures of achievements performed by its master's ancestors, which Mrs. Winstanley, the housekeeper, pronounced to be "*chief divers*" of art, and which, she averred, Lord de Montmorenci put the greatest of regards upon.

"Well," said Lady Herbert, as she looked at these, "it would be wiser and better, perhaps, if all heads of families entertained this respect for those who preceded them. The bad ancestors might serve as beacons; the good for examples and incitements to follow in their track. Those who look not to any time but the present—to any person but their own persons—lead frivolous and selfish lives."

She was sorry when she had thus spoken to her child; for there was an unallowed, but obtrusive thought, which said, "such is the life of the man you love."

What incalculable harm do the vices and even follies of parents not entail upon their offspring! How melancholy is the fate of him, or her, who dares not recall a child's veneration to the character and conduct of the wedded partner! It is true that flaws, and specks, and imperfections, must be found more or less glaring in all humanity; but these it is the child's duty and delight to hide or to soften. It is the great dereliction, the breaking of the holy marriage bond, which, however custom may gloss over and fashion uphold, leaves an awful doubt, a damning stain on children's children, and poisons the very source of social and domestic happiness.

Lady Herbert and her daughter were shown over the whole house, and several apartments had been prepared for them; but they chose one on the ground floor, which communicated to a flower-garden; on one side descending by steps into a *parterre*, and on the other to the library, which was under the long picture-gallery.

"My lord fancied your ladyship would make choice of this room; for he said you were fond of flowers and books; and, besides, it was so sunny and cheerful. His lordship generally inhabits it himself."

"Then, perhaps, Mrs. Winstanley, we had better go up stairs, lest he should come while we are here, and not find his own apartment free."

"No, my lady, by no means. He has such a regard for your ladyship's family, as being wards of his lordship; and,

indeed, no wonder, seeing Miss Herbert is so beautiful a young lady (and she looked very significantly as she pronounced the eulogium,) that I am sure nothing would be more charming than for his lordship to think you had lived in his own favourite chamber."

"If you are sure of that," rejoined Lady Herbert, "then we will occupy it. Besides, we are only to remain for a week; and I hope, we shall not be very troublesome to you."

During this conversation, Sarah Herbert had gone into the garden. It was quite in keeping with the house. It was a *garden trim*. Alleys, and arbours, and fountains, and the whole state and array of Flora's court, were duly set out, and waiting upon her footsteps; art was the handmaid of nature. Beyond the garden was an open grove, half encircling and sheltering it from the north-east, on one side; on the opposite, pleasant fields, which terminated in the low blue hills, while Windsor Castle rose in the middle distance,

"At once the Muses' and the Monarch's seat."

Miss Herbert was enchanted; she flew about like a gossamer, and explored every alley and every flower-bed. Nor was Lady Herbert indifferent to the scene; but to *her* all enjoyment was marred, for every sentiment of delight brought along with it the regret that Lord Herbert no longer shared it with her.

"How I wish papa were here!" said Sarah Herbert; "and Anna, why could she not come, mamma? Do you think she is remaining in town to see Captain Danesford?"

"I wish that was her motive, but I am afraid she will reject his addresses."

"Why afraid, mamma? she is quite right not to marry any body if she does not love him. I never would marry but for love."

Lady Herbert smiled a melancholy smile, and said, repressing a sigh,

"I cannot blame that sentiment, my own Sarah; but Miss Clermont's situation is one which demands prudence. If I were dead, and you were married, what a lonely creature would Anna become! for, though her fortune renders her independent now, a woman alone in the world, is a poor tempest-stricken bark, subject to every gale of fortune."

"My dearest mamma, you dead! Say rather, what would then become of Sarah, your own Sarah?" and she wrapped her arms around her mother, with thrilling tenderness.

"It is very pleasing, too pleasing, dearest child, for me to receive these declarations of your affection, but, on soberer reflection, I must tell you that it is the law of Providence and of nature, that the offspring usually survive the parents. Do not, then, rebel against the power of the Most High; it is infinitely more cruel when the decree is reversed. But we are not obliged to dwell on these events before they occur. God will give us strength in time of need, if we never forget Him in times of peace and prosperity. There are some persons I know who say otherwise, and who imagine that we ought to be always realizing sorrow in all its possibility of advents. But I cannot think so; life would then be a living death; and I, on the contrary, am persuaded that the giver of it never intended we should be altogether miserable here. Tried, yes; but not condemned to perpetual anguish."

Thus, while walking in those pleasant gardens, did the mother and daughter converse in gentle peace, and innocent affection. They remained out till it was almost dark, and their spirits were at once calmed and strengthened by the quiet of the scene.

The next morning, they drove to Windsor. How truly regal, how poetically beautiful is that royal seat,—how connected with history, with gallantry, with love!

"My favourite Surrey," rejoined Sarah, "is the person who always presents himself to my fancy when I think of Windsor. I wonder who was his Geraldine, and whether Lord Orford's guess was a true one. I think the sonnet in her praise tallies well with the supposition. Do you remember it, mamma?" And she repeated the following lines by memory:

"From Tuscan came my ladie's worthy race,  
Fair Florence was some time her ancient seate;  
The western isle, whose pleasant shore doth face  
Wild Camber's cliffs, did geve her lyvely heate.  
Fostered she was, with milke of Irishe brest:  
Her sire, an earle, her dame of princes' blood;  
From tender years in Britaine she doth rest,  
With kinge's childe where she tasteth costly foode.  
Hunsdon did first present her to mine yien,  
Bright is her hewe, and Geraldine she hight.

Hampton me taught to wishe her first for mine,  
 And Windsor, alas! doth chase me from her sight,  
 Her beauty of kinde, her virtue from above,  
 Happy is he, that can obtain her love.'

"But then if they were thus well matched in lineage and degree, how came it that he succeeded not in obtaining that happiness? for he was surely the very man I should think must have been most captivating. And then he carried her fame to distant lands; he upheld her fame by his muse and by his pen. Oh yes, that is just the sort of person I should most admire. But I see none such now, mamma; are there any men of that sort now alive?"

"Doubtless there are, dear one," Lady Herbert replied smiling, "but not many; and I know not how it is," she added, relapsing into seriousness, "but we seldom meet with the objects in real life, of whom we form visions in our wishes. I sometimes have thought that it is hard, knowing that there are—that there must be—others in this wide world who feel and think as we do, that with those particular beings we hardly ever meet. Perhaps life would not be the life of this world, were it thus. And in the very few instances in which I have heard of such a union of beings! or sickness or death has laid siege to it. But we do not love the less, Sarah, because we are not loved in the particular way we deem it pleasant to be loved. No! love is a sentiment which I am sure exists in some, though in very few persons, abstractedly from all impersonisation. And when it lights upon an object, imagining that object to be suited to itself, it never falls away from its allegiance through disappointment, when it discovers its mistake."

"I cannot understand *that*, mamma. I am sure if I was ill treated I should soon be cured of loving."

Lady Herbert was silent. They arrived at Windsor Castle, and having obtained an order to view it, they proceeded through all its ancient walls of massy strength, to behold the modern magnificence within. They were delighted with all they saw, and the associations of the past gave additional interest to the present. Most persons visit places of renown as they would visit any place of public entertainment; but it is a reference to past history which can alone fill the mind, however much the eye may be gratified by modern splendour, and which gives an abiding interest to the scene.

To Lady Herbert, there was one circumstance connected

with her early childhood, which lent to her present visit an additional interest. She had been taken by her aunt, Lady Colebrook, when a very little girl, to walk on Windsor Terrace, when the good King George, the revered and the beloved, walked there with the royal family, and she still thought she saw the whole scene as it then existed. The monarch, his queen, and his family, graciously mingling with their people, and followed by a thousand eager eyes, a thousand loyal hearts. She mentioned how vivid the recollection was to her daughter; although, she said, I was so very little a girl at the time, that my aunt held me up, to enable me to see my sovereign over the heads of the dense crowd which intervened. May the same sentiment ever dwell in the hearts of British subjects to his descendants, and may the latter ever look to that good man as their example, and meet with their reward! Love to the royal family was implanted in Lady Herbert's being, by the person who had been to her as a mother, and who instilled into her mind the very essence of the first copy she ever wrote in large text-hand, and which had been written upon her heart's tablets: "Fear God, honour the king."

Sarah's young feelings responded to her mother's enthusiastic expressions on the subject, and visiting that royal palace stamped those feelings still more deeply on her mind.

That night they again slept in peace, and, weary with having been long out in the air, they remained till a late hour the next day in bed.

The post brought them letters and papers; the first from Miss Clermont, and one from Lord Herbert, which last Lady Herbert eagerly opened. A glow of pleasure overspread her face, as she read aloud a few kind words, expressive of the happiness it gave him to know that they were enjoying the country air, hoping that it would be beneficial to their child, and concluded by desiring them not to come to town, so long as they derived health or amusement from remaining where they were.

This letter, so different in its tone from Lord Herbert's spoken words, was a relief to Lady Herbert: and, as usual, she hailed the returning kindness with a fond belief that it was to last for ever.

How long was she thus to be duped by the kindness, the very worth of her own nature? How long was she to remain in this fool's paradise? Would any one have the

cruelty to remove the veil entirely! There are friends in the shape of human beings, who are ever on the watch, under the semblance of friendship, to unseal the eyes of the trusting blind.

"What can this mean?" said Sarah Herbert, reading one of the fashionable newspapers aloud, which gave the scene of The Hermitage in tolerably veracious detail, though in peculiar newspaper phraseology, which converts every subject into questionable shape; but yet, mingled with falsehood, enough of initials and of truth remained to make Lady Herbert listen with painful curiosity to the long paragraph.

As Miss Herbert read on, she was sorry she had called her mamma's attention to it, for, without knowing exactly what was implied, she made a tolerably fair guess at its meaning.

"I am sure," said Lady Herbert, "that is one of those lies which the fabricators of scandalous articles compose from time to time. It bears all the marks of being a got up piece of news. But, what appears extraordinary is, that the writers of similar histories have never yet learned to convey their intelligence in the language of ladies and gentlemen."

Notwithstanding the turn Lady Herbert gave this circumstance, her daughter was aware that it pained her, and she reproached herself for having thoughtlessly wounded her mother. The kind letter from Lord Herbert was resorted to as an antidote to the poison, and his wife dwelt on it with confiding fondness. Not so Sarah Herbert; she had learnt to *distrust* her father, ever since the affair of the jewels; and, though she loved him as her parent, she no longer honoured him as such. In short, she believed that he entertained an undue attachment for the Lanti, and the story in the newspapers confirmed her suspicions. "It is not," she thought, "out of kindness to us, that he bids us remain in the country as long as we like; it is, that we may not hear or know any thing of this occurrence, and that he may pass his whole time with his favourite singer; but I see through his contrivance, and, if I have the least influence, I will persuade mamma to go back to town immediately."

Mother and daughter both felt, that day, that they could not freely communicate their thoughts to each other, and they mutually had recourse to a book to avoid discourse. It is



very sad when two beings so truly attached find it impossible to be natural; and still more sad when they are dis-severed by the conduct of the person they ought most to respect and love.

The library at Fairfield was a very large room; unless it was illumined by an unusual quantity of light, no person could be distinguished at night from the one extremity to the other. Lady Herbert and her daughter were turning over some ancient herbals, at a late hour that evening, and were so intent upon their occupation that they both started on hearing footsteps; and, as the person approached nearer to them, they both uttered an exclamation of surprise on beholding Sir Charles Lennard.

"Do not be alarmed," he said, addressing Lady Herbert; "Lord Herbert is quite safe, although he has had an accident which might have been dangerous, and I lost no time in coming to give you the details of the story, before any exaggerated accounts should reach your ear."

"Good heaven!" ejaculated Lady Herbert, "what has happened to him? Let me go instantly."

"Compose yourself, I entreat, Lady Herbert; a very slight contusion on the arm, which will oblige Lord Herbert to wear it in a sling for a few days, is the only injury he has sustained. He was driving his cabriolet at a rapid pace up Hay Hill—the horse slipped and fell; he endeavoured to get the animal on his legs; but somehow, in standing up, it made a sudden effort to recover itself, threw Lord Herbert on the pavement, and his right arm was considerably bruised. Miss Clermont escaped unhurt."

"I am thankful it is no worse," said Lady Herbert, sinking into a chair.

"How came Anna to be with papa?" asked Miss Herbert.

"It is very fortunate," rejoined Sir Charles, without replying directly to her question, "that Miss Clermont was not killed."

"And you are sure," questioned Lady Herbert, "that Herbert is not otherwise hurt?"

"Quite certain. I entreat you to calm your anxiety for his personal safety; a very few days will restore to him the use of his arm."

"But we will go, Sarah—we will go to him directly."

"There is no occasion, I assure you, dear Lady Herbert, to terrify yourself in this manner. Allow me to recom-

mend your remaining here, at least, till to-morrow. I will return to town very early, and prepare Lord Herbert for your arrival."

"Prepare! what preparations can he require?" said Miss Herbert. "He must be glad to see us, you know."

"Oh! certainly; but when a person has, may be, a degree of fever, it is best not to excite them by any surprise."

"Sir Charles is right, love; I will wait till to-morrow, and he will kindly be our messenger, and announce our arrival to your papa."

After many anxious questions from Lady Herbert, and many kind assurances from Sir Charles, they separated for the night. Miss Herbert's mind was full of vague suspicions; she thought there was more to be told than Sir Charles had told them; but she did not express this to her mother, and was soon in the deep slumber of youth, which shuts out all anxieties for a time at least. Lady Herbert could not sleep,—she was miserable; more miserable than the actual circumstance warranted—an oppression she could not define pressed upon her heart: her temples throbbed, she turned and turned again, but found no rest, and she determined to rise and try if the cool air would restore her to composure. She half dressed herself, wrapped a large shawl around her, and, opening the glass door that led into the garden, was tempted by the beauty of the scene, which the moon lit up with peculiar brilliancy, to stroll into the parterre, and, as she inhaled the wafted fragrance of the flowers, and listened to the gushing waters of a neighbouring fountain, she gradually became less agitated. The power of nature in soothing the mind, is greater than any other; and gazing up into the blue serene of the heavens, which was thickly gemmed with stars, she repeated aloud Addison's beautiful verse.

"What though no real voice or sound,  
Amid their radiant orbs be found,  
In reason's ear they all rejoice,  
And utter forth a glorious voice,  
For ever singing as they shine,  
The hand that made us is divine."

Some one approached: she could not see the person,—a high yew hedge divided her from the object. She was alone—it was late at night! alarm took place of tranquil medi-

tation. She walked quickly towards the house, but, mistaking one turning for another, she found herself going farther and farther away. And all the while the footsteps came nearer and nearer; at length, just as she was ready to sink with terror, Sir Charles Lennard said,

"It is I, Lady Herbert; you have nothing to fear: suffer me to escort you back again."

"Thank God, it is only you, Sir Charles!" and she affected to laugh at her own fears; but she did not like the appearance of a nocturnal rencounter, and her voice trembled, as she added,

"Do not let me disturb your walk, I know my way, now, and, being no longer under the impression of a foolish terror, can reach the house in perfect safety."

"Nay," he said, "I cannot consent to that; Lady Herbert, this opportunity of speaking to you alone, is one which I cannot let pass: forgive me, oh forgive me, if I venture to detain you," and he took her hand. She did not like to appear confused, and therefore assuming an indifference she did not altogether feel, she replied,

"There is no need of this midnight colloquy; whatever you wish to say to me alone, I will hear to-morrow morning; but at present I begin to feel the night air is chill, and I must request that you leave me to return immediately into the house."

Her expression and tone of voice in pronouncing these words were more peremptory than the words themselves. She felt that there was something implied in Sir Charles's behaviour, which demanded reserve on hers.

"Nay, Lady Herbert, for once I must avail myself of the chance which fortune throws in my way—for once you must hear the truth—and he passed her arm through his. She made an effort to draw it away, and he gently, but forcibly retained it.

"Sir Charles, you dare not—you would not compel me to remain in your company when it is unpleasant to me, and unfitting that I should do so! I entreat, I command you to let me go. You are Herbert's friend,—you would not offend his wife? He will withdraw his friendship from you—he will bar his door against you."

"Withdraw his friendship?" and he laughed. "It is a long time since he has done that. Bar his door against me? He dare not! for it is I alone who have retained his roof over his head. You are deceived—most excellent, most

beautiful as you are—you are left for another, ay, and another, and another still. And you are blind, and fond, and true to one who laughs at and despises you for your stupidity and weakness.”

There was that in this speech which turned Lady Herbert's heart to stone. She stood immoveable, fixed to the spot, and remained perfectly silent and motionless.

“You know,” Sir Charles went on to say, “that you have passed your whole life in a deceitful dream. You know, though you have never owned it to yourself, that the coarseness, the levity, the utter disparity of the man's mind and being, compared with yours, have blighted your existence, and that your heart has spent its lava flood in vain! Oh! let it do so no longer; hear the accents of real and of delicate attachment of a man who would hang upon your looks, and obey their interpretation, before you could utter them—of a man who would cherish your fading beauty, as fade it must in so chilling an atmosphere, in one so uncongenial as that which now you breathe, and have breathed—of one who would live but for you!”

“Sir Charles, cease to insult me; cease to think me a fool. Is it for this that you accuse my husband of infidelity, for the vile purpose of supplanting him in my affections? You are weak, as well as wicked, to have made such a disclosure of your views, together with the calumnies you have uttered on Lord Herbert. But both are as hateful to me as they are fruitless. I scorn you—I scorn your information—I abhor myself for having listened thus long to your polluting tongue! Leave me, and never enter my presence again.”

She withdrew her arm from his grasp, and, with the rapidity of lightning, fled from him. But he overtook her, and again forcibly detained her.

“Only one word—one word—to say that you will live to know that you have wronged me. Never shall I breathe what has passed this night to mortal ear. I implore your pardon for the offence I have given you. I can only plead in extenuation of my fault, your beauty—your wrong—my passion. Farewell!” and, dropping her hand, suffered her to return to the house.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE SECRET.

I apprehend you,  
 You think I will be jealous; as I live,  
 Thou art mistaken, sweet; and to confirm it,  
 Discourse with whom thou wilt, ride where thou wilt,  
 Feast whom thou wilt, as often as thou wilt,  
 For I will have no other guards upon thee  
 Than thine own thoughts.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

THE next day Lady Herbert was in town; Miss Clermont met her at the hall-door, and bade her have no alarm whatever on Lord Herbert's account, as he was so well that he was gone out.

"And as to myself," she said, "for I conclude you heard that he was so good as to drive me to my cousins, I escaped unhurt."

"I am thankful," was all Lady Herbert could reply; for there was a sickness at her heart, and a dreadful foreboding of evil, which she could not wholly dispel.

"I am happy, dear Anna," said Miss Herbert, "that you are safe, and that papa has escaped with so little injury; but I wonder why he went from home at the very moment he must have expected us. I shall scold him for that. I think it was very unkind."

So felt Lady Herbert; but she answered,

"Some business he could not put off, has obliged him to go out."

The door opened—Lady Herbert rushed towards it. Lord de Montmorenci came in. She stopped suddenly, and turned very pale.

"Good Heaven! you are not well, Lady Herbert," and he caught her in his arms, for she fainted.

The sudden revulsion of hope and disappointment, when she thought to have embraced her husband, and saw only Lord de Montmorenci, quite overcame her. She was no

longer mistress of herself, and, for a moment, lost all sense alike of pain and pleasure.

When she recovered, she called her husband to come to her, in such plaintive accents, that it might have touched the hardest heart, and, mistaking Lord de Montmorenci for him, as he was still supporting her, she threw her arms about his neck, and sobbed on his breast.

"This is very terrible," he said, "do send every where for Lord Herbert!" and as he spoke he bore her to a sofa, and having laid her on it, added, "I will go directly in search of him," and rushed out of the house.

While her daughter and Miss Clermont busied themselves in restoring Lady Herbert to composure, and had in some degree succeeded, the former whispered to Miss Clermont,

"This is not mere physical illness, something more has come to mamma's knowledge than I know of. Anna, do you know any thing about papa?"

"What should I know; how should I know any thing concerning Lord Herbert? and if I did, would it be my duty to tell it *you*?"

"I think it would, Anna."

"My dear Miss Herbert, it is your part to honour and love both your parents and not to pry into secrets concerning them, the nature of which you cannot judge and ought for ever to remain in ignorance of."

"Honour to whom honour is due," replied Miss Herbert, significantly."

Lady Herbert called her child, and she returned to her side. "Is your papa come home, yet?"—I have had a very frightful sort of dream—I am really not well."

"I fear you are not, dearest mamma; but I beseech you for my sake, for papa's sake, for all our sakes, compose your spirits."

"I will try, sweet child." But there was a fixed melancholy in her air and accent which gave little hope of her being able to succeed.

About dinner time, Lord Herbert came home. He met Lady Herbert with that open frankness of manner, which was his peculiar characteristic, and, whatever surpisions to his disadvantage might have arisen in his absence, they were dispelled in the sunshine of his presence. This charm was felt and acknowledged by all—how much more then by his fond wife. To be loved by him, to live and breathe in the same atmosphere, to hear his voice, to see his smile,

that was Lady Herbert's sole delight, and her love of her daughter emanated from, and was a branch of that same devoted passion.

When the husband and wife were alone together, the latter, who had never had a secret from him, and who thought that all concealment from him, even for a good end, was a crime—related her adventure with Sir Charles Lennard, and expressed her determination never to see him again at her house.

To Lady Herbert's surprise, he only laughed, and said, "My poor good Mabel, one would suppose you had dropped from the clouds! Do you imagine that half the handsome women in the world, do not receive similar declarations, and have not similar stories told them of their husbands, in order to wean them from their duty? To be sure they have! and if they are good and wise, they treat such avowals and scandal with the scorn they deserve; but, for Heaven's sake, do not render us the laughing-stocks of all society, by making this affair public, or force me into fighting a duel, perhaps. Lennard is, on the whole, a very good fellow, and, though I owe him a grudge, for giving you pain by talking nonsense about the Lanti, yet men will be lawless, and I cannot feel very angry with him for admiring you, dear Mabel."

Lady Herbert never expected such an answer to such a history; and she felt indignant to think she should have been exposed to insult, without any chance of redress; but the words, "do not expose me to the chance of a duel," took the lead of all other sentiments, and she only replied,

"Dearest Herbert, I will suffer any thing—I will bear any degradation, sooner than risk your safety for a minute; but I wish you could feel more *with* me on this subject than you seem to do: at all events, I cannot, and ought not to receive Sir Charles on the same friendly footing as formerly."

"Do as you like, Mabel; only remember I am not jealous."

"Would to Heaven he were!" thought Lady Herbert, as he left her to ponder over her sorrows.

For some time after, the usual routine of life at Herbert House went on, and there was no apparent change in the lives of its inhabitants. Sir Charles had been invited, a few days after the above conversation, by Lord Herbert to dinner, and had resumed his usual place in the family. He

continued to show Lady Herbert, by his quiet manner, that he had not dismissed any of his pretensions, or seceded from the position he formerly held in her society: all that remained for her to do, was to treat him with marked coldness, and confine herself to her own apartment at the hours when he came into the house.

Lord Herbert dined more frequently at home, was more attentive to his wife, and appeared fonder than ever of his daughter; this, in itself, was happiness to Lady Herbert, for she argued, a man who loves his child cannot be careless of the example he sets her—cannot be indifferent to retain the respect as well as love due from a daughter to a father.

Lord Herbert proposed one day to take Miss Herbert and give her a row on the river. "Mabel hates the thing, I know; so you and I, Sarah, will go alone, and I will be security for your safety to your mamma."

The latter could not refuse the proposition, although she had a misgiving that some accident would occur, but Miss Herbert overruled her, and pleaded so hard to be permitted to go with him, that she obtained her suit.

"Miss Clermont must stay and take care of mamma," said Lord Herbert.

Miss Herbert thought that she gave a very particular look at Lord Herbert as he addressed this order to her, and seemed sorry to be deprived of a pleasure in which she professed to take a peculiar delight.

"Oh do, papa, do allow Miss Clermont to come with us; I am sure mamma will spare her."

"Not this time, Sarah," he replied. "Miss Clermont knows how much pleasure it gives me to enjoy her society, but it would be unkind to leave Lady Herbert alone, especially as I know she will agitate herself all day, and she will require a judicious friend to divert her mind from conjuring up all sorts of fancies."

Miss Herbert and her father were early at the river-side, where a boat awaited them. The day was fine,—all circumstances were smiling and propitious for the excursion. Miss Herbert expressed her innocent delight, and her father had never before shown himself to her, since she was capable of judging characters, in such an amiable light, such charm of manner, such amusing variety of conversation; now, she thought, I can understand mamma's adoration of him.



"Let us go and eat white bait," he proposed. "I ordered my cabriolet to be at Greenwich, in case we find it too cold to return by water; and then driving fast we shall be home even before your mamma can expect us, which might not be the case, should we return by the river."

"That is true, papa; and I would rather do any thing than vex mamma."

After they had taken refreshment, Lord Herbert proposed to walk to see the Observatory. "Few things," he said, "were finer than Greenwich Park; but because it is near, one never thinks about it."

Miss Herbert's spirits were exhilarated by the air, the exercise, her father's tenderness towards her, and the gentle and kind things he had said of her mother. "I must have been wrong," she thought, "when I could have imagined any thing to his disadvantage; but the ruby heart crossed her recollection, and again she doubted her mind. They arrived at the top of the wooded hill, which commands so fine a view of the whole reach of the river, and all its adjuncts of shipping, &c. They sat down to admire the prospect on the fresh grass; and, having gazed for some time, Lord Herbert said suddenly, as if recollecting himself at the moment,

"By the way, Sarah, I am going to put your discretion to the proof. Can you keep a secret?"

"To be sure I can," she replied quickly.

"Are you very sure? Remember a secret that is known to more than two persons is no longer a *secret*; therefore, if I tell you the one I wish to repose in you: you must solemnly promise me that it shall rest between us."

"Dearest papa, mamma and you are one."

"True, love; but for a very particular reason, this secret, which I purpose to intrust to you, is one which it would only vex her to know; and which I am certain, a year hence, when she shall be acquainted with it, she will thank us for not having divulged sooner. My mentioning the subject to you at all, Sarah, is the strongest proof I can give you of the opinion I entertain of your good sense—sense beyond your years; but I wish to impress upon you, before I make any farther disclosure, the necessity of your being proof against all temptation whatever to betray it; particularly not yielding to any imagined dictate of honour, which might induce you to betray the trust. Think well, then, Sarah dear, before you accept my confidence, for it will be

too late to repent after you have heard it—*then* you are bound to secrecy. When you know my secret, my child's lips must be sealed till the period arrives when I shall bid her speak. Do you hear me, Sarah? for you answer not."

"Dearest papa, you terrify me; I do hear you, but I never heard your voice sound as it does now—never saw you look so serious, so severe."

"Silly child," Lord Herbert replied, attempting to appear playful; but his features resumed their expression of anxiety, and he added, "Sarah, I have much to say, and little time to say it in. Decide, therefore, on a father's blessing, or—"

"Stop, stop, dear papa!" and Miss Herbert pressed her lips to his. "Do not, I beseech you, say any thing contrary to a blessing. I should carry the sound of it to my grave."

"Pooh, nonseple, Sarah; you are too sensible to allow romance to take place in *your* mind, of common sense."

This praise bore an allusion of *dispraise* in it towards her mother, and she replied, with a calmness of determination which obliged Lord Herbert to change his tone,

"If you wish to repose a trust in me, dearest papa, which you desire me not to make known to any one, not even to mamma, I am ready to obey you, since it is your will, and I shall faithfully keep my promise. But if you give me the *choice* of knowing or not knowing your secret, I had far rather remain in ignorance of it."

"Well, Sarah, though I think you more childish than I supposed you to be, and consequently less deserving of the idea I had formed of your character, still I do sufficiently rely upon you to accept this very imperfect proof of your duty; and, as the subject I am partly under the necessity of speaking to you upon admits not of delay, I desire you to swear, solemnly swear, that you will not, by allusion or hint of any kind, suffer one word of what I utter to transpire."

Miss Herbert still hesitated; she trembled, and turned pale.

"Silly girl!" her father said; "silly girl! to be afraid of your own father, who loves you."

"Oh!" she replied, bursting forth with the passionate expression of her affectionate heart, "worse than silly—wicked, dearest papa, absolutely wicked, to imagine that *you* could tell your child any thing she ought not to hear."

"You are most right, love. Now, I know you to be my own Sarah. So swear, my child, by every thing you hold sacred," taking both her hands in his; "swear that you will never divulge what I am going to tell you, till I give you leave to do so."

"I swear that no mortal power shall make me divulge what you are going to tell me, till you give me leave to do so."

"Thanks, my dear child."

"Oh! don't thank me; I cannot bear that you should thank me!"

"Sarah, you may save both your parents from utter ruin."

"I! how? Let me know how? what is there I would not do?"

"Learn, then, that I am in the greatest difficulties. A moneyed speculation, in which I was induced to enter, in concert with Sir Charles Lennard, has involved us both, and, without your assistance, I shall be disgraced. It were vain to go into all the details with you; you cannot comprehend them, for I scarcely understand them myself. But, very shortly, we shall have to abandon our country and fly from the grasp of the law, unless you, my dearest, save us from the ignominy of such a measure, by giving up your fortune, left you by Lady Colebrook, to me." He paused, and looked steadily in her face. She too, returned his gaze.

"Is that all, papa?" she asked. Could you doubt for a moment but that it will be the proudest, happiest day of my life, whatever proud or happy days may be in store for me (and she fondly thought, strong in youthful hope, that they were as the sands of the sea for multitude;) "yes, none can ever be more so than the one which enables me to fulfil a duty to you. But why should mamma not know this?"

"Sarah, you are not aware that it would go nigh to kill her, if she knew that for a moment I risked your fortune. But, indeed, the risk is in fact nothing. By the timely aid it will afford me I shall be enabled to right myself, and, long before you will want it, restore it to you with double interest."

Lord Herbert did not intentionally tell an untruth when he said this to his child; for it is wonderful how people deceive themselves respecting expenditure, as well as the ho-

hour and dishonour of money transactions. He hoped what he said, but he could not be certain of it. To his child, however, it was as certain as though parchment and seals of law had secured it to her. But she said, for she was quick and penetrating, and of capacious understanding,

"I am only fifteen, and, till I am of age, how can I command the money? You know Lord de Montmorenci is my guardian, and has the management of my fortune. He *must* know the circumstance; for how will he give it up to me, merely because I ask it? or how can he, indeed, without utter dishonour?"

"Ay, very true indeed, Sarah," replied her father, as if recollecting the circumstance for the first time. "But stay," and he appeared to think deeply. "I have devised a way in which it might be managed. One person, indeed, must know the truth; but, as he is a party concerned, he will never divulge the secret. Sarah," changing his tone, "should you have any dislike to be married?"

"I don't know, papa. I never thought about being married. But what has that to do with the money?"

"Every thing. Sir Charles Lennard has a great admiration for you, and would have proposed to you, but for this unfortunate derangement in his affairs. His heart is yours, Sarah, if you will accept him; and then, you know, your fortune will naturally be placed in his power. Lord de Montmorenci will never refuse to make over his rights as guardian to your husband."

"Husband!" and the whole expression of her countenance underwent a change. "I am quite unprepared, dearest papa, for such a question; but, without any hesitation, I can answer you, I never will marry Sir Charles Lennard."

"This is a very peremptory resolve, Sarah; but I would not for the world wish to bias you on so serious a subject. I will tell you what would do just as well: that you pretended to Lord de Montmorenci that you were to be married to him, and that you loved him, and wished to relieve him from his present embarrassment. Will you consent, Sarah, to this innocent stratagem? It cannot possibly entail any responsibility on you; for I shall inform Sir Charles of your resolution, never in fact to listen to his suit; and it will save your father from disgrace."

"But surely, papa, Lord de Montmorenci will much

more readily listen to me, if I plead in behalf of my own father, than in that of a man who is supposed to be a professed gambler. The latter I never would consent to."

"And I," rejoined Lord Herbert, "would never be under an obligation to Lord de Montmorenci; for, much as I once felt a friendship for him, much as I still appreciate his character, his manners are overbearing—he is apt to play the guardian over me *even now*, and at my age that is not to be endured. No, Sarah, listen.—If you consent to be directed by me in this affair, to stoop to a harmless deceit in order to procure me the money requisite, you will save your mother from the sudden overthrow of her station in life, the loss of our place in society, the flight into a foreign country, and your father from disgrace."

Miss Herbert replied, after a pause, "I *will* procure the money. You shall have my fortune to do what you please with; but I will not pretend that I like Sir Charles Leonard. Leave the matter to me. I am confident I shall be able to manage it; trust to your child, but do not exact of her that she should affect love for a man she dislikes."

"Well, Sarah, I can only repeat that this day week I must have ten thousand pounds, or the consequence will be such as you would tremble but to hear of. Remember, also, that if this comes to your mother's knowledge, it will be the death of her, and that if you betray my secret I will not outlive its publicity."

"Dearest, dearest papa, do not say so! do not distress me so as to unfit me for the task I have undertaken to fulfil. I will try to be calm, if you are only calm, papa; but, if I see you as I now see you, if I hear you utter such dreadful words as these, I cannot answer for myself; indeed I cannot."

"My child! my child!" and he pressed her to his heart with a natural burst of tenderness. You will not prove me false. You will save me. I shall owe more than life to my daughter!"

Miss Herbert wept not, neither did she betray the inward struggle and dismay which she felt; but the calm and beautiful scene, the brilliant day, and the innocent pleasure she had experienced, were vanished. She had a conviction, a foreboding, that, young as she was, life itself had lost its gloss, and that the hand which ought to have upheld and protected her, was, in reality, stretched out for *her destruction*. The understanding is ripened by afflic-

tion; but it is nevertheless melancholy, when experience and knowledge of moral evil usurp the prerogative of time, and wither those blossoms of youthful confidence and belief in virtue, which ought to be the portion of the young, and which bring forth fruits in their season, when no untimely blight gives them *unripe decay*.

On the day following that unhappy one which opened to Miss Herbert's view her father's unprincipled mind, she waited anxiously for Lord de Montmorenci's usual hour of appearing; and, when she heard his well-known knock at the door, she was so agitated, that she feared she had undertaken a task beyond her strength. She was alone when he entered; he inquired, with his accustomed earnestness, for her mother, expressed his hope that her expedition with Lord Herbert had been productive of much pleasure to her; and, as she made no reply, he gazed earnestly in her countenance, and inquired if any thing had occurred to vex her?

"Yes, I am very much vexed; and you only, Lord de Montmorenci, can alleviate my distress."

"I! What do you mean? What can you mean?"

"That which must not pass my lips. That which must not be known to mamma, or it will kill her. That which I must obtain from you, or I know not what will ensue—perhaps self destruction!" and her features were convulsed, and her voice lowered to a tone of agony, which entered into Lord de Montmorenci's very heart.

"I must have ten thousand pounds of my fortune, which is by far the greater part, I well know, placed at my disposal this day week; and you must ask me no questions, and I must give you no explanation whatever—and you must, indeed you must comply."

"Miss Herbert, you know not what you demand of me; you know not to what you may subject me. I have no right to give you the command of your fortune for six years to come. Your aunt so left the disposal of the money in her will. It is not, indeed, it is not in my power to do this illegal act; but, if I could, are you aware that you would leave yourself and Lady Herbert without any resource, in case of?"—he would have said in case of your father's squandering his whole fortune; but he stopped, and only added, "in case of any great distress."

"I know it all—I am aware of all; but, nevertheless,

you *must* grant my request; and you *must* not mention the circumstance to mortal."

"Without consulting Lord and Lady Herbert I dare not, I cannot listen to you on this subject, Miss Herbert. Do not pain me by forcing me to refuse you; but, it is impossible, at your age, that you should understand the nature of the demand you are making, and I could never forgive myself, were I clandestinely to enter into such a transaction."

"Then, Lord de Montmorenci, you will be the ruin of us all; you will see us disgraced; you will see us fugitives; you will see my father a corpse!"

"Miss Herbert, compose yourself, I implore you; you know that I would do any thing, every thing, rather than witness so dreadful an alternative. But give me leave, as your true friend, to implore you to tell me the whole truth, remember a counsel can do nothing for his client if the latter will not tell him the whole undisguised state of his case; I do not question you from any idle curiosity, or for any reason whatever, but simply in order to be able to serve you more effectually."

"It is in vain, Lord de Montmorenci, that you ask me to tell you for what purpose I demand the money. I have sworn an oath, and I may not break it. For heaven's sake, for the sake of every thing you hold dear, grant my suit;" and she sank on her knees before him.

"In my turn, I beseech you, dearest Miss Herbert," raising her as he spoke, "suffer me to implore you to defer this subject for twenty-four hours, and, at the expiration of that time I will give you my answer."

Some one approached, Miss Herbert could only say, "Life or death hangs upon your answer!"

Miss Clermont entered the room.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## SCENE AT THE HERMITAGE.

When beauty invites me, resist her how should I?  
 How fly from attractions so pleasing, so new?  
 I could not be true; if I could not, how could I?  
 I could not, unless I could, could I? could you?

THE LATE M. G. LEWIS.

THE Signora Lanti inhabited one of a row of houses near the Regent's Park; they had just been built, and there was still an appearance of country about the place, which is now quite done away: the fate of all similar spots of ground near the metropolis, claiming the advantage of fresh air and open space, but which are quickly invaded by the lovers of rural retirement, who either cannot, or will not, purchase the pleasures of the country at the expense of being distant from the town, so these *rus in urbe* become mere excrescences of the great city's self, the fungi of avarice, and the folly of pretension to be any thing rather than what they affect to be,—a solitary seclusion.

The Lanti inhabited one of this row of houses which was designated Saints Row, and to her particular abode was superadded the designation of *the Hermitage*! The house or box thus christened, was built on the slight declivity of a grass hillock, cut into many irriguous paths, with stunted shrubs, dotted over the whole space, and the figure of a Cupid (what business he had there, let Saints Row tell) in the act of pointing an arrow, to show which of these paths led to the house, and, for fear of any mistake, an inscription on his pedestal was superadded. The building was composed of painted wood, and represented fretted stonework. Angels' heads, whose wings were coloured of every dye, supported the bright green verandah, and a porch with seats led to the interior of this solemn retreat. The first apartment certainly did not correspond to the name of the above dwelling: the walls were decorated with fluted muslin covering a pink paper; and dirty draperies of the same, pended in all directions from windows and doors, and gave



a dim but certainly not a religious light over the room. A table spread with the offerings (and costly ones they were) of the rich and the vain, and the poor (who made presents at their friends' cost,) to their idol's shrine, stood always ready to receive more; while the idol herself, covered with shawls and jewels, presided in this temple of frivolity and folly.

It was here that Lord Herbert was seated one morning, listening to the siren's song, when she suddenly stopped singing, and looking at him very significantly, said,

"Il denaro caro." Then proceeding to speak in English, she added, "If I have not de sum I want by next week, I go, I fly. I shall be in de Bench, if I set not off."

"Oh, not so; you shall have it, depend upon my word, do not doubt my honour."

"I do not doubt you, but dere be so many who do want your money, and you cannot make de coin."

A loud ring at the door, announced another visiter. The Lanti rose, looked at a reflecting glass, in which she could see who came in without being seen; and saying, "I must admit him, it is Carlos," she nodded to a little black dumb boy, who officiated as page, and who had come into the room to receive her orders; and the next moment notwithstanding Lord Herbert's frowns, Sir Charles Lennard entered.

"Signora, I hope I see you well. Ah! Herbert, so early? I did not know you were of the lark tribe. Really, signora, since you have taught my friend the art of early rising, I can believe you are capable of effecting any thing—every thing."

All praise was welcome to the Lanti, she received this false gookl, as though it had been true ore; and entered into an animated conversation upon the merits of a rival singer, newly come over, against whom she vowed eternal vengeance, for having once supplanted her at Naples; and who, she said, she meant to exterminate in the first duet they were to sing together in the ensuing opera.

"Vid de thunder of my organ, I can suffocate her voice, strangle it at once. Yes, yes, you shall hear, you shall see. Banyan," she called to her page, "bring me some coffee, place my cushions," and she threw herself on the couch. "Ah," she said, when he had executed her orders, "if you were but deaf, as well as dumb, you would be the finest

little serving fellow in the world. Banyan, you let me pour a little vitriol into your ears?"

Banyan bowed, and put his hand on his heart. She laughed aloud, so did the boy; but his laugh was like that ascribed to the hyena, his large eyes were dilated to twice their size, and he showed the whole range of his ivory teeth.

"I should not like to incur Banyan's displeasure," said Sir Charles, "he looks as if he could eat me up at a mouthful."

Another ring announced more visitors: this time two ladies came to pay their *devoirs* to the singer. The Countess of Rougemont and Lady Featherston, ladies of high consideration in the circle of fashion. There was an interchange of cheek-touching and endearing terms of recognition between them and the Lanti; and, after a conversation on indifferent subjects, Lady Rougemont made known to the signora her intention of giving a concert, and came to solicit her attendance at it, on which she said its success depended. At first, the signora professed her sorrow at not having a single night to spare, and, in a thousand graceful terms which her native language supplies, lamented the impossibility of her being able to comply with her request; but, when Lady Rougemont presented a valuable trinket to propitiate the good will of the singer, she with many affected refusals, was at length persuaded to accept it; and calling to Banyan, to bring her a splendidly bound book, she looked over her engagements, and found that on Monday fortnight she could comply with her friend's request. This happy discovery settled the business to the satisfaction of all parties. Is it impossible that English women of rank (though one of these had married a foreigner) should be so gulled by the avarice and impertinence of such persons? Look at many similar scenes in the world occurring daily, and read the answer.

Sir Charles Lennard and Lord Herbert seemed determined to sit each other out; but, at length, the former departed, and only said in his quiet tone to Lord Herbert, as he left the apartment,

"Have you any commands to Herbert House?—I am going there."

Lord Herbert now made a violent declaration of love to the Lanti, to which she was listening very condescendingly, when sound of many voices of persons approaching

the house, caused his Lordship to go with precipitation to the window, and he beheld Miss Clermont, Miss Herbert, Mr. Clermont, and Captain Danesford, at the very threshold. Captain Danesford appeared to be endeavouring to lead Miss Clermont away, and she was laughing, and declaring she would know the secret. It seems that a board, put up announcing the adjoining house was to let, had been mistaken by Miss Clermont, as designating that one, which the Lanti inhabited, and she said she was looking out for such a house for a friend of hers, and thought it would exactly suit her.

Captain Danesford had whispered to Mr. Clermont, who was walking some way behind the ladies, and they endeavoured to deter them from going in; but the more they did so, the greater was their curiosity, and Miss Herbert being swift of foot, ran on, and was actually at the door, when the rest of the party followed.

Banyan, whose ears still tingled with the idea of the vi-triol his kind mistress had spoken of pouring into them, guessed that the arrival of strangers would not be agreeable to her; and, grinning and bowing, he had opened the door wide, and made signs to Miss Herbert's inquiries, if the house was to be let, in the affirmative; she said, "Why do you not speak?"

He again signed that he was dumb.

"Poor boy!" putting half-a-crown into his hand; "so you will show us the house." And she advanced into it, just as the rest of her party followed; the gentlemen, distressed at their wilfulness, and Miss Clermont apparently enjoying their evident confusion. But, when Sarah Herbert beheld her father, in an instant her spirits sank; they stood opposite each other in silence, and in utter dismay. The signora was the first to recover her presence of mind; she affected to take Miss Herbert's visit as one made to herself, inquired for Lady Herbert; and, when Miss Clermont and her brother, and Captain Danesford followed, she declared herself delighted to see such a bevy of friends.

"Lord Herbert had just come," she said, "to propose a *soirée musicale* at Herbert House, and to settle the day, and now Miss Herbert would help them in choosing what music she should sing."

She did the honour of her abode with perfect composure; but Lord Herbert could not rally himself into being natural, and, declaring he would leave it to the ladies to determine in so weighty an affair, he wished the

Lanti good day; and, calling to Banyan to order his cabriolet, who made signs that it was in *the stable*, his lordship left the room.

Miss Herbert wished to do so likewise; but Miss Clermont seemed bent on remaining longer. She professed herself to be tired, and, sitting down, began to converse with the signora. She asked her for how long she had had the house, and what was its price, and a thousand particulars respecting herself and her engagements as a public singer, with an apparent interest, which pleased the Lanti, and which she replied to with a mixture of ingenuousness and impudence which would have been very amusing to a mere studier of character; but which Miss Clermont turned to another account. At length, the Lanti addressed herself to Mr. Clermont, and asked him how it chanced that he had returned from sea so soon? He said that his ship had been unexpectedly recalled in order to be appointed to another station. And when Miss Clermont had gained all the information she wanted, they left the Hermitage.

Miss Herbert's countenance betrayed the shock she had felt in having seen her father visiting the Lanti, but she said nothing; and to Miss Clermont's observation, that it had been an unexpected pleasure to get a glimpse of Lord Herbert, she only answered, that it was very good in her papa to take the trouble of setting the arrangement of the concert which he intended to give.

"I commend your prudence, my dear Miss Herbert. It is quite right. I am happy to see you have profited by my advice; on former occasions, you were not used to be so discreet.

As soon as the Lanti was left alone, she called, in no voice of harmony, to Banyan.

"You little dog, you, how came you dare to let all dose vimen into my hose? Come near, you *vero demonio*"—and she almost pulled off one of his ears. "You are deaf, Mostro Nero? Oh! you no answer,"—slapping him.

Banyan opened his mouth, and grinned, pointing to show that he could not speak.

"Ay, and you shall be deaf, too, before long, I can tell you."

The little victim danced upon his feet, first on one, then on the other; and grinned from ear to ear.

"Vat, you dare to laugh, Corpo di Bacco; you shall smart for it." And, taking up a whip that she had for

her dogs, she ran after the unfortunate boy, crying out, "Régalo, régalo, pel Banyan," and licked him most unmercifully round and round the room, till he escaped by jumping out of the window.

So much for the Signora Lanti's feminine graces.

## CHAPTER XV.

'Tis very true; I thought you once as fair  
As women in th' idea are;  
Whatever here seems beauteous seem'd to be  
But a faint metaphor of thee.  
But then methought there something show'd within,  
Which cast this lustre o'er thy skin.

\* \* \* \* \*  
But since I know thy falsehood, and thy pride,  
And all thy thousand faults beside;  
A very Moor, methinks, placed near to thee,  
White as his teeth would seem to be.

\* \* \* \* \*  
Nay, when the world but knows how false you are,  
'There's not a man will think you fair.

COWLEY.

THE day was come on which Lord de Montmorenci had promised to meet Miss Herbert, and on which she trusted to procure the portion of her fortune which she demanded from him. They met alone in the drawing-room, having watched their opportunity, or rather Miss Herbert having done so; for Lord de Montmorenci earnestly hoped that her mother would come in, and insist upon knowing the cause of her child's agitation. He had even doubted whether or not it were his duty to inform Lord Herbert of the circumstance, notwithstanding his extorted promise of secrecy; and, but for a too certain guess at the motive of Lord Herbert's demands on his child, he would have done so. But he could not bear the idea of paining Lady Herbert, by a discovery of her husband's entanglements with unworthy objects, which he knew had been the chief cause of the derangement of his affairs; and Lord de Montmorenci had taken the resolution of advancing the money himself, run-

ning the risk of losing it, rather than suffer Lady Herbert, or her daughter, to become the victims of Lord Herbert's delinquencies.

In few words, therefore, he informed Miss Herbert of his determination, and told her that the money she had demanded was lying at his banker's hands, placed there in her name, and subject to her disposal.

Miss Herbert called him her protector, her friend.

"Not, only," she said, "my guardian, but my guardian angel."

"You distress me, dear Miss Herbert. I have only done what every true friend would have done in my place; but, it is necessary that I should warn you, this is the last pecuniary sacrifice I will make. You forbid me to speak to Lord Herbert on the subject (although I feel conscious that this money must be requisite to *him*, not to *you*,) or rather, you imply that I must not do so, for you have commanded my secrecy towards every one in regard to the transaction; otherwise I should have warned your father of the dangers he incurs by associating with those who make him pay for all *their* vices."

"Whatever you may think, Lord de Montmorenci, I implore you not to say a word to papa; he would hate you, and would banish you his house, and we should never see you again, and I should be so sorry."

The deep expression of anguish which marked Miss Herbert's countenance, and her attitude of eager supplication, as she clasped her hands together, were to Lord de Montmorenci irresistible. He promised her that he would not divulge one word of the transaction to any person.

Miss Herbert gradually recovered composure.

"I may tell papa, then," she said, after remaining some time silent, "I may tell him that the money is in ——'s banking house. Bless you, bless you, dear Lord de Montmorenci, for having thus arranged the business. I was in despair. I thought I saw mamma struggling to conceal some hidden sorrow; and as for papa, I feared something too terrible to put into words; but you have now delivered us from all these threatened dangers. Thank you, again and again."

Lady Herbert entered. She looked at her daughter, and then at Lord de Montmorenci; she was certain they had been conversing on some subject of unusual interest, but she said nothing till she was alone with her child. Then she asked,

"Tell me, Sarah, of what were you discoursing, when I came into the room. I know that of late you have been much agitated; something has occurred which you have concealed from me. Oh! my child! the first beginning of wretchedness in families is concealment; even if we have something to blame ourselves for, better tell it to those most dear to us, than hide it from them. The evils are incalculable which grow out of a system of disguise; those who practise it enter upon a labyrinth, the mazes of which they can seldom penetrate, or pass through in safety. Sarah, dearest, remember, that one step in the career of deceit, inevitably leads on to a thousand; if you would enjoy peace, have no secrets from your nearest and dearest relatives."

Miss Herbert threw her arms about her mother's neck, and sobbed audibly.

Lady Herbert endeavoured to sooth and compose her; but it was with great difficulty she succeeded, and she was aware that her daughter had a secret which she would not disclose to her.

This new cause of sorrow threw an additional gloom over her which she could not dispel. Hitherto Sarah had been to her a source of unmixed bliss; she was the sunny spot on her dark horizon, the nucleus on which her existence turned; but every worldly trust is unstable, the most hallowed affections are apt to degenerate into idol-worship, and then they are cast down and broken.

"If Sarah ceases to love me," thought Lady Herbert, "I only wish to die; no hold remains to me in life."

To feelings such as Lady Herbert's there is no medium in happiness, the common degrees of affection, which constitute the acme of others' capabilities of loving, were not the hundredth part of what she had to bestow; but then she required an equal return, and where could she expect to find it?

While Lady Herbert brooded over the mystery which her daughter tacitly refused to explain, Lord Herbert was in a state of anxiety and perplexity more harrowing still, because it was self-created. He rang the bell so violently that Lady Herbert, in an agony of fear, ran down to his study.

"What do you want, Mabel?" he asked, in an angry voice.

She said she feared he was not well, or that some accident had occurred,

"You are always conjuring up terrors which have no foundation in probability to excuse them. I expect persons on business, and beg you will leave me. I can't be disturbed."

"Dear Herbert, you look ill," she replied, lingering near the door, "let me share your anxieties; let me, if possible, remove them."

"Will you never cease your fooleries?" he rejoined, "never have done with your romance? Really, dear good Mabel, you are enough to wear out the patience of a saint."

Lady Herbert checked the anguish which she felt, and giving him one glance, in which her whole soul was blent, she silently and slowly withdrew.

Again Lord Herbert rang the bell violently; his servant obeyed the summons. He swore at the man (what a pity it is that superiors should allow their choler thus to demean them to their inferiors,) he swore at him for not having done so sooner; the servant replied,

"Your lordship sent me to the Regent's Park with a note, and I have only had time to return this moment."

Lord Herbert bit his lips.

"Send Sarah here—tell Miss Herbert to come to me directly." And in another moment his child stood before him; she was pale and trembling.

"Am I to thank you, Sarah, for having done what I wanted, or am I to fall into the utter ruin I described to you?"

"Dearest papa, the sum of money you want is lying at —'s banking house."

"Sarah, are you sure, are you very sure?"

"Quite sure, papa."

"And tell me, Sarah, did De Montmorenci not inquire *why* you asked this sum of him? He must be deucedly changed if he yielded to your request without investigating the business."

"Do not be angry, dearest papa, when I tell you that Lord de Montmorenci knows it is for you the money is placed in my name; of course I never told him so. But he could not believe that I wanted money; I, who have every thing I can desire."

"But you did not satisfy his curiosity?"

"No: I only said that mamma and I should be ruined if he did not comply with my entreaty."



"That was foolish, Sarah, why tell him any thing?"

"Because at first he refused my request altogether, till he should consult with mamma, but I urged so strongly that it might kill her to know the truth, that at last he consented, but, at the same time, declared he would never again enter into a similar transaction."

"Well, this is very unpleasant; but so long as I am not obliged to seem to know that he has fathomed the secret, and that I have the money, I must undergo the sting. Sarah dear, you are a good girl; not one word of this to your mother, remember: and for the present we are saved from immediate ruin. You may go, love."

Frederick Clermont, by his unexpected return to town, was thrown once more into the dangerous delight of seeing Miss Herbert at every moment of the day, and although he was aware of the misery he was preparing for himself in the indulgence of his passion for her, he said and thought with the improvidence of youth, "Well, I had rather have a few short hours of happiness, than let the cup pass by me untasted. Now is my time for rapture. A few years over and my heart will cool as all hearts do, and I shall at least have to think that *once* I knew what love was."

The love which is felt in early youth, certainly has no after growth, but there is a love more deep, more terrible which exists in riper age, and carries away with its tide the whole of existence.

Sarah Herbert was quite exempt from sharing in her cousin's feelings, and in the innocence of her heart, treated him with that familiar kindness which their mutual age and relationship warranted. The delicacy and freshness of his passion, and the thousand attentions to which it gave birth, spread around her that blitheness of life, that atmosphere so redolent of sweetness, which she could not but enjoy at the moment, and she did not allow herself to think that an after time must come, when she would regret having given pain to one for whom she felt a sister's regard, by encouraging him, although unintentionally, to hope for more.

Captain Danesford, on his part, became daily more enamoured of Miss Clermont, and fancied that he made some advance in her good graces; every day a new party of pleasure was contrived, in which these four young persons participated; and as they were chiefly out of door amusements, they were the more exhilarating, and cloyed not: of some of these Lady Herbert partook, and Lord de Mont-

morenci also. One day, they all went to the Dulwich Gallery, and they agreed that it would be pleasant to go on, and pass a night or two rambling about the beautiful county of Kent.

"Nothing is more amusing," Lord de Montmorenci observed, "than sleeping at unfrequented inns. People imagine it is not safe, to do so in the neighbourhood of London, but with the attendants you would have, there could be no danger; and there are many of these in the villages and by-ways, even of the surrounding country of London, which are full of interest and charm."

They all agreed it would be delightful to make such an expedition, and entreated Lady Herbert to consent to the plan.

"Ah!" she thought, "I should enjoy it too, if Herbert would be of our party, but of that there is no hope."

She determined, however, that she would not mar the enjoyment of others, however imperfect her own might be; and although she entertained no hope that her husband would form one of their company, she went to him and made the proposition. He acceded to it with great good-humour, and said he should have quite enjoyed going himself, were it not for business which must detain him in close attendance in town the next three months.

"Business! what business?" thought Lady Herbert, "he who hates all business, and delegates even the ordering of his household to his servant!"

"But she spoke not, only sighed, as usual—that habitual inward sigh, which is like a drop of the heart's blood spilled.

"I hope, however, love," he said to her, "that you will go with Sarah, for I am certain she requires change of air, and nothing is so wholesome as these brief excursions, one has not time to be tired of the country, and besides they make a return to town doubly enjoyable."

"I am afraid I shall long all the while to be back in the smoke; but, as you say, Herbert, for our Sarah's sake, any thing, any sacrifice of self is not too much. I will go then with her to-morrow."

"And I will give orders to have every thing ready for you, so pray stay as long as you like, *or may find it agreeable*, Mabel."

This was very kind, but not the *kind* of kindness which poor Lady Herbert desired.

Had her husband expressed a wish for her *return* that would have been gladness to her; but as it was, the disappointment (which custom had never taught her to be callous to) of meeting with no answering sentiment of affection from him, chilled her very heart. Miss Herbert, for the time, forgot the shock she had met with in the transaction to which her father had made her become a party, and enjoyed the thoughts of the promised excursion. At her age, painful impressions readily give place to the sweeter and more congenial ones of innocent pleasure. It was the spring time of her youth, it was the spring time of the year; it would have been unnatural, had her mind dwelt upon sorrow, upon suspicion, upon gold.

When the day came it was rainy—a thick drizzling rain, without a hope of clearing up; nevertheless, Frederick Clermont declared he could see through the mist, and was certain it would be fine; so said Captain Danesford.

“We must not wait for fair weather,” they said, “we must go out and look for it; let the ladies be safe stowed away in the carriages; we will ride, and before we are two miles out of town, I’ll be bound we shall have fair wind and weather, or my skill is never again to be trusted.”

There is something catching in the buoyancy of hope. It seems as if good fortune were to be commanded, not sued to; his prognostics were accepted as prophecies, and the party set out. All suburbs of great towns are detestable; the vulgar luxury of the wealthy is placed in juxtaposition to squalid wretchedness—their extremes are brought together in painful contrast, and it requires the exercise of more thought than a passer by is inclined to give to reconcile these evils to the mind.

To the young gay hearts who composed the party, the drive to Sydenham Hill did not appear tiresome, and before they had reached its summit, the sun shone out, dispersing the mist, and nothing remained to tell of the unpromising morning, save a thousand drops pendant from the hawthorn hedges, and the birds shaking their wings in disport, and the freshness of the perfume which exhaled from the earth and the trees. As they wound round the top of the hill, they gave a sigh to *the improvements* of the place, and were glad

to forget what it once had been in its wilder and more pleasing state.

They drove on till they came to the pretty rounded hills of Bromley, and rested in its pleasant neighbourhood, at one of those inns which might have sat for the picture of those Lord de Montmorenci had described. Laugh and jest, and song and good cheer, went round; after which, Miss Clermont and Sarah Herbert proposed a walk. Lady Herbert accepted Lord de Montmorenci's arm, and they proceeded to wander about. Some children came offering their services, to show them to the Lovers' Walk, as they called it, a path which led through some hop-fields to a coppice, and where from a height, the beautiful park of Lord Farnborough was seen. These little cicerones were prolix of their information, respecting the localities of the place, and two or three spoke together, to the utter exclusion of being understood.

"But why is this called the Lovers' Walk?" asked Miss Herbert.

"Because there were two lovers—because Margaret and William—because William and Margaret—no, because Dame Honeyman came and threatened William—"

"That was not it, sister; but because Margaret fell sick, and they say, William poisoned her."

"Oh, no, you forget, brother; she died for love."

Thus the children attempted, but vainly, in broken phrase, to tell the history which gave an interest to the scene, but which it was plain they never could tell, so long as they were all bent upon speaking at once.

"Now I'll tell you a story," said Miss Herbert, "a very short one; but, be attentive, and every one of you hold your tongues," which they did *literally*, as though it were impossible for them to obey her otherwise.

"Very well," she said, laughing; "now you shall hear my story. There were a number of little boys and girls once upon a time, who all wanted to talk at the same moment, and to tell a story, which they did not seem to know very thoroughly themselves; and they every one contradicted the other, and they never got any farther than a few words, and never would, if a young lady had not ordered them in the first instance, to be all silent." Then she desired Fanny the oldest of the children, to be the teller of the tale. They all laughed, hung down their heads, and twirled their fingers, except Fanny; but she looked up proudly, and dropping a courtesy, said,

"Yes, miss; I be the oldest—I be fifteen; and I will tell you the story of 'The Lovers,' if so be the rest will suffer me to speak."

"By all means, Fanny, I wish to hear the tale very much." And sitting down upon some felled trees, the party prepared to give their attention to the story of the lovers.

Fanny narrated the history, partly in her own phraseology, and partly in that, which she had learnt by heart.

"A many years ago, Margaret Honeyman was the prettiest girl in Bromley, and several of the best of the village lads wished to keep company with her, but she was of a light and careless fancy, and never minded any of them. Howbeit, she suffered them to court her, and got ribands and laces at fair-days, and many envied, and some found fault with her, but she and her mother were well to do in the world, and no one could fix any real fault upon them. At last, one day, a recruiting party came to our village, and several families lamented that the military should stay in the village, for they wiled away some of the choicest of the young farmers, to leave their ploughs, and homes, and enlist to go beyond seas. While all this was going on, Sergeant May (I think they called him) fell to courting Margaret, and he was, they say, a very comely man, and full of book-learning; he could write as well, or better nor the sexton, and after some weeks he carried off Margaret's heart; and it was all settled that they should be married, as soon as Sergeant May could come back from asking his father's leave, who was a weaver by trade, as lived at Richmond. It was, however, necessary, that he should first inform his captain of his intention; and Captain Goldburn told him that a soldier should not marry till very late in life, and that his gun and his sword should be his wife and children; Sergeant May, however, was a favourite of his captain's, and, after much entreaty, the captain consented to the sergeant's marriage. He had only, therefore, to go and get his father's consent, and persuade him to give them some money, that Margaret might set up house with, in times of peace, though she was determined, she said, to be a good soldier's wife, and follow the drum, wherever her husband went; but then her poor old mother would require more to keep her, when she would not be with her, to take care of and cherish her; so that she wanted a little money to add to her stock, and to comfort old Margery for her

loss—for the child's marriage, which may be a gain to the child, is a loss to the parent whom she leaves, I've heard say. Well, Sergeant May left Bromley, and when he got to Richmond, he was obliged to remain many weeks there, for his mother died, and his father was broken hearted, and he was a good son, and he could not leave him, till such time as the old man should begin to cheer up; but he wrote to Margaret, and told her he would soon be able to make almost a lady of her, and that he loved her dearly, and longed to be back with her. In the mean time Captain Goldburn saw Margaret one day, as she came to the barracks with her mother, to help to carry some of the men's washing to their cottage; and he thought her very handsome; and he made some excuse or another about Sergeant May, and went and paid her a visit. From one visit he paid her many; and he gave her presents, and her old mother too; and he persuaded her to walk with him in this very walk, and the village folk did call it thence the Lovers' Walk; but they all found fault with Margaret for being 'gaged like to the sergeant, and yet listening to the captain's speeches. At last, she listened so often, and so long, that he came to tell her it would be a shame so pretty a girl should be a sergeant's wife, that if she would go with him she should ride in her coach and go to plays and masquerades, and lead a very different life, full of nothing but pleasure and fun. So she listened and listened till she began to love him far better than poor May, and at last consented to go with him wherever he chose to take her: then they met late and early, sometimes in the churchyard, sometimes down by Bromley Wall, but oftenest in the Lovers' Walk; and there they were one night a love-making, she saying that she never before knew what it was to love a man, when they heard foot steps advancing, and, by the light of the moon, who should they see but Sergeant May. He directly stops, and laying his hand on Margaret's arm, asks her if she was not ashamed to behave so—she who had promised to be his wedded wife.

“‘But,’ he added, ‘Margaret, you shall never be more to me nor a worthless woman. Nevertheless, I will not be treated so by any man without my revenge, and though you be my captain, and Captain Goldburn though you be, we are man and man now pursuing the same woman, I honourably, you dishonourably. Yes, you are a villain and a coward, if you do not resent this blow.’

"And he struck the captain, and spat on him. A party of soldiers, who chanced to be loitering about not far from the spot, hearing high words, approached, and the captain desired them to take Sergeant May into custody for drunkenness and disorderly conduct.

"'I am not drunk,' said May, 'and there is not a man of you, worthy of the name of man, who would not do as I have done; nevertheless, I must abide my sentence.'

"He made no resistance, but as he was being taken away, he said,

"'Margaret, as for you, you are not worth an honest man's thought; but remember, that if you trust to such a one as Captain Goldburn, you will come to sin, and shame, and misery.'

"'Off with the fellow,' the captain cried, 'he's drunk, away with him; lock him up till he comes to his senses, and then a good flogging will do the rest.'

"But there was something in the sergeant's words and manner that sank into Margaret's heart, and she insisted on going home to her mother, notwithstanding Captain Goldburn's fine words; so he cursed and swore, as the story goes, and vowed he'd have his revenge. And so he had, for the poor sergeant was condemned to, I forget how many lashes, and he was tied up, and suffered the punishment without flinching. Twice he was asked to beg his captain's pardon, and the rest of the punishment should be remitted, and twice he refused to do so.

"'Not,' he said, 'for any unchristian feeling, but because he would always declare to the last of his blood and his breath, that it was a shame to seduce another man's affianced wife, and then punish him for having told him the truth.'

"'Tie up the obstinate dog again,' cried the captain; and he was tied up, and he suffered the whole punishment, and was taken away senseless and carried to the hospital, for the doctor said, one more lash and he would die. And he did die as it was, for his wounds mortified, and he sank under the fever that came on; but at his death he asked to see his captain, and holding out his hand he said he forgave him; then he sent for Margaret, and said he forgave her also, but told her to be aware of sin, for we must all come to a death-bed; and then the sore of sin would be greater anguish than even the sores of which he was dying. And Margaret never took her eyes off him till he breathed his

last. And then, the story goes, she never closed them more ever after, but the little sleep she got she slept with her eyes wide open. Well, after Sergeant May's death, his captain was arraigned for cruelty, and for having caused his death, and he was scouted by all his officers, and the king took away his commission, for the court pronounced sentence against him, and he was broke, and as he was a very proud man he could not bear it, and so went mad; for pride, they say, comes before a fall, and he is now in some lunatic asylum. As to Margaret, she never rested, and her open eyes were fearful to look upon; nobody could bear to see her but her poor mother, and at the last she disappeared from the place, and none ever found her out; it is thought that she wandered to the sea-coast, for she was traced to Worthing, and some of her clothes were found on a lonely part of the shore, and it is supposed she drowned herself; and they do say her spirit walks about here o' nights, but I never seed it, nor yet that of her old mother, who some pretends hobbles about, leaning on her stick as she used to do when in life, only wailing and wailing dolefully, and crying Margery, pretty Margery; and this is the rightful story of the Lovers' Walk."

"What an interesting, what a dreadful history!" exclaimed Miss Herbert.

"I never could have been so soft," cried Mr. Clermont, "as to forgive that dog, Captain Goldburn. The man who attempted to cast dishonour upon my wife, my sister, or my mistress, I would shoot without remorse, like a mad dog."

"I honour your indignation against crime," observed Lord de Montmorenci, "but I cannot approve your taking vengeance into your own hands."

"No, no," cried Lady Herbert shuddering, "vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord; but that is for God alone to say, not for man."

"Well, well," rejoined Frederick, with his gay, good-humoured face, which looked as if he never could harbour any evil passion for two minutes together. "I only hope I may never be put to such a trial."

The party spent two days rambling over the country, and Lord de Montmorenci declared that, though it was *not* Italy, there was a romance in the sylvan fields, and hedgerows, and hop-grounds, which must be called the romance of nature, and which he averred was to be found every



where, and enjoyed by every mind not seared by the world, in a primrose path, alike as in the classic sites of Italy or Greece.

"I should think it a great misfortune, and a bad sign of myself, if I lost the sense of pleasure which such scenes afford."

But Lady Herbert, "like bird in bondage held that fluttering seeks the skies," longed to return to her home, and to behold again him who was the light of her life, the sunshine of her skies.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE ANNIVERSARY.

Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
Admit impediments. Love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove.  
O! no! it is an ever-fixed mark,  
That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;  
It is the star to every wandering bark,  
Whose north's unknown, although his height be taken.  
Love's not time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks  
Within his bending sickle's compass come;  
Love alters not, with his brief hours and weeks,  
But bears it out, even to the edge of doom.  
If this be error, and upon me prov'd,  
I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.

SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS.

It was on the morning, or rather the afternoon of the 28th of May, 18—, that Lord Herbert opened the door of his wife's dressing-room, and inquired if Sarah was there?

She was, and answered to his call; so he entered and sat down, and said,

"Sarah, would you like to accompany me and Lennard by water to Richmond to-day?"

"To be sure I should," she replied eagerly.

"Be ready then at four o'clock."

"I will dress directly, papa; and perhaps, mamma, we

shall have time to finish practising our duet before I go out."

"No, love, there will not be time," Lady Herbert replied, and the sadness which came like a cloud over her expressive countenance did not pass unnoticed by her daughter; and the latter whispered to her,

"I will stay with you, I will not go to Richmond."

Lady Herbert shook her head.

"No, no, thank you, my child; go, dress yourself, to be ready when your father calls, and come to me just to say good-bye, before you leave home."

Miss Herbert prepared to obey; but as she opened the door, she looked back at Lord Herbert, and the meaning which that look conveyed did not please him. He frowned, and his countenance wore a severity of aspect to which she was wholly unused. It was the first time that he had ever frowned on his *favourite*—his *spoiled child*, as people called her. Some evil influence was at work to turn him quite aside from his natural bent; and the frown and the scowl was perceived by Sarah Herbert, as well as by his wife.

Parents would do well to remember that their children, even when they are the most lenient, are their most keensighted judges.

Miss Herbert made no audible remark, and shutting the door, left her parents alone together.

"For heaven's sake, dearest, take care of yourself and Sarah to-day; there have been so many frightful accidents on the river lately, owing to the steamers, that I cannot divest myself of anxiety."

"Do not be a fool, Mabel," was Lord Herbert's reply; and he left the room pettishly.

Every day some new trial was Lady Herbert's portion; and she said mentally, in sorrow rather than in anger,

"Yesterday I saw him with the woman he loves; to-day I know his child has judged him. He frowned on the innocent one, who has hitherto bound us together. That tie also will soon be broken; and then, if it is, why then I shall be able to part from him. Our child must not witness a daily renewal of her mother's wrongs; she must not be biassed by her feelings in favour of one parent, to blame of the other; and to avoid this, she must cease to behold the recurrence of incidents which must inevitably produce an unfavourable impression upon her of her father's charac-

ter. So the time seems drawing near when we must part."

Miss Herbert returned, decked out in gay colours for the excursion she was about to make with her father. She looked beautiful! and Lady Herbert gazed at her child with a terrible pang, as she thought, "And you, my loved one, my pride, my glory, you will be the innocent cause of separating us. Not willingly, oh, no; you would die rather than offend either of us; but still it will be you, and for your sake alone could I bear to leave him." Then addressing her aloud, she said,

"Sarah, love, take a shawl to put on when you return; for the evenings are always chill especially on the water."

"But I wish you were coming with us, mamma. Why do you not come?"

"I am not very well to-day, Sarah."

"Not well! Oh, then I will not leave you, mamma; positively I will not. Miss Clermont is gone to her cousin, and you will be quite alone if I go out also. Indeed, you shall not be left by yourself; I should be miserable to think of leaving you. I will remain with you."

"It must not be, sweet Sarah, thank you very much, for offering to give up a pleasure to pass a dull evening with me; but I really wish you to go. Your papa will be vexed if you do not, and that will vex me far more than being alone. I shall lie down and rest, and be quite well, I dare say, long before you return. Hark! Francis is calling you. Go, Sarah, go quickly, God bless you, love," drawing her child towards her and kissing her—"bless you! bless you!" she repeated several times fervently, and the blessing made Sarah Herbert's heart ache; she hesitated for a moment between obeying her mother and yielding to the impulse of her feelings and remaining, but Lord Herbert called loudly again, and the next instant she was seated by him in his cabriolet driving rapidly to the river stairs, where they were to embark. When arrived, the boat was ready, the party assembled. Sarah Herbert did not, at the first moment, think of who was, or who was not in the boat, till she was actually seated under the awning, and then she looked round and beheld Lady Rougemont, Lady Featherstone, the Lanti, and a lady whom she did not know even by sight. Sir Charles Lennard, Mr. Melville, and Mr. Beaumont were the gentlemen of the party.

Miss Herbert was generally admired, and received more

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attention than is usually paid to very young persons; on that day every body present seemed bent upon showing her marked adulation, and the Signora Lanti was officiously kind. Miss Herbert had an instinctive dislike to her, and was careful to avoid seeming pleased by her advances; without being rude she was cold and haughty. Her father observed her manner and it displeased him.

"How handsome Miss Herbert is grown!" observed Sir Charles Lennard to her father, "and so like Lady Herbert, they might pass for elder and younger sisters."

"Yes, she is every inch her mother over again," he replied. And he added with bitterness, "she has filled the girl's head full of her own prejudices and fantastical notions."

"Come, come," rejoined Sir Charles laughing, "you have no right to find fault with your daughter, for she is decidedly handsome. Yes, decidedly so," he went on to say, as he passed his eyes leisurely over Miss Herbert's person and face.

Lord Herbert made no reply, and approaching the Lanti talked apart with her during the rest of the way to Richmond, and left his daughter to take care of herself. The gentlemen all vied with each other in endeavouring to win her good graces, and amuse her, but from the moment she had recognised the Signora Lanti, her spirits had sunk—all idea of deriving pleasure from the excursion ceased, and she never forgot for one moment, the horrible conviction she entertained that that woman was her mother's rival; so the beauty of the river, and its banks decorated with villas, and the various boats which skimmed its surface, and the brightness of the sun reflecting every object in the water as in a mirror, were all lost upon Miss Herbert, and she remained cold, silent, and insensible to every attempt which was made to divert her thoughts from the one point which she almost felt it wrong to dwell upon; and yet, from which she could not withdraw them. The pleasant promise of that day proved fallacious, and neither the row down the river, luxurious fare at Richmond, nor the walk after dinner on its beautiful hill (when the setting sun illumined the landscape with as brilliant a touch as the pencil of Claude ever imprinted on his glowing canvass) conveyed any pleasure to Sarah. When Sir Charles Lennard placed her in the carriage, which waited to convey her home, and she found her father was not to accompany her, she wept near-

ly the whole way to Kensington. Then she thought, "Mamma must not see my tears," and she sobbed and repressed her sobs alternately, till she succeeded in quelling the emotion in which she had indulged.

If Miss Herbert had been miserable on that day, it was a day of far greater misery still to her mother, for it was the anniversary of an epoch she had once hailed with joyfulness, it was the anniversary of her marriage-day—an anniversary, of any event in private life, if kept at all, is supposed to commemorate an epoch whether of sorrow or of joy, and to renew the feelings felt at the moment, and to live them over again; but the nature of things is such, that few persons can venture upon the trial. Bold is the heart that dares to recall its sorrow, in the first maddening anguish of its grief; and presumptuous is that hope, if not fallacious, which can persuade itself it will feel the same rapture twice.

That day sixteen years back, Lady Herbert had been for a brief space the happiest of human beings; but the *anniversary* of her felicity never returned: it had been *kept* till the custom waned into a pale and formal observance, but it had never owned its original charm. Still, she had not hitherto experienced so painful a change, so total an overthrow of every fond remembrance, as on that day which is now recorded. Till now her husband had at least *remembered*, if not hallowed the day: he had never, till now, let it pass quite unheeded. He had said some one kind word, he had made her some memorial gift, he had spent some of its hours in her society at least; but this day he had either passed it over in utter forgetfulness, intentionally, or unintentionally, either was alike mortifying to Lady Herbert. He had even taken their child away from her; he had left her quite alone, to brood over the changes seventeen years had effected.

"This day seventeen years," she thought, "he swore to be faithful to me, even unto death. He has broke that oath, I am, as it were, dead unto him; he feels no tie which binds him to me, not even Sarah; his love for her stands alone, *apart* from me. I wish that I felt so: yet no, I do not—I thank God that I do not. I am the same; I love him just as I did on that day, and Sarah is more dear to me as being *his* child, than she is to me as my own."

It was, indeed, perfectly true, that Lady Herbert was the same, though the envious tongue of scandal had pronounced her changed as a wife; but it wronged her wholly.

"I am willing to forgive, and to forget my wrongs," she cried, "and would from this day renew our vows and wed him over again. Yes I will tell him all I think, all I feel. I will implore him to give me back his affections, implore him to keep them steadfast henceforth, and I will blot out his past offences, as though they had not been: but first I will boldly ask him whether he loves me or not, if not, I will require no false professions; if he has the honesty to confess these seventeen years which have passed over *me* without effacing my love, have not so passed over *him*, and that time has expunged from his feelings that passion which it has in vain attempted to alter in mine. I will loose him from all restraint—no feigned affection can stand the trying touch of true and genuine love. I shall know the truth. I will set him free; but I will not live under his roof, bear his name, be called his wife, while another shares his affections. Nominal ties were never made for me. I will not barter them for the true, I will not be the convenient cloak to his other attachments. Rivals in power and place—rivals in the toys of existence may and must occur—but a rival in the heart of my wedded husband—no: it is a crime, it is unnatural to suffer it tamely."

Such were Lady Herbert's thoughts—such were some of the passionate expressions which broke from her lips in words, during that sad day which to her seemed interminable. At length, she heard a carriage drive up to the door. "They are come!" she said, and almost every thing she had thought, every feeling she had felt was merged in the delight of that moment.

"I am so glad you are come back in safety, Sarah, I have been anxious about you all day: but where is your papa? Did you come home alone, all the way from Richmond?"

"I do not know where papa is—I came home alone."

Mother and daughter paused for a moment and spoke not; at length, Sarah Herbert said,

"You were ill, dearest mamma, when I left you, and I was so sorry to leave you; but I hope you are better now."

"Oh! it was nothing," she replied, forcing herself to smile, "I am quite well. Sarah, dear, give me a description of your party; have you been amused? I hope so. Who accompanied you besides Sir Charles Lennard?"

"There was Mr. Melville, and Mr. Beaumont, and one or two other persons I had never seen before."

"What! no ladies, Sarah?"

"Yes, and Miss Herbert coloured, and then hesitated; and then, speaking rapidly, said, "Yes, Lady Rougemont, Lady Featherston, and the Lanti, and another whom they called by some foreign name, which I have forgot."

There was a long silence, which Lady Herbert was the first to break, saying,

"You must be tired, Sarah. Nothing is so fatiguing as a party of pleasure; you must go to bed, it is late."

Miss Herbert felt she could not be of any use or comfort to her mother at the moment, and she was overcome by the various circumstances which had combined to render her excursion to Richmond any thing than a pleasurable one; so she left her to retire to bed, and before she slept that night she uttered a warmer prayer for her mother than she had ever prayed.

Lady Herbert sat up waiting for her husband. What she had just learnt confirmed her in her determination of seeking some explanation of his conduct. Her resolve was not formed on a hasty or angry impulse; it had long been taking root in her mind, and the moment was come for decision. She was naturally indignant at Lord Herbert's having taken his daughter to a party, of which his supposed mistress was the chief attraction, and other women of very doubtful characters, whose society was wholly unfitting her daughter (as he himself would have been the first to say, had they not been the protectresses and allies of the Lanti.) So long as Lord Herbert confined his insults to herself alone, she never had had courage to come to any explanation which might tend to a final rupture; but such a defalcation of all principle in his conduct towards their child, was an offence she deemed to be of too vast consequence to her welfare, to pass over unreprieved and un-commented upon. Her spirit was fired with all a mother's indignation, as well as all a wife's jealousy, at the idea of her pure and innocent child being gradually drawn to a level with such effrontery and vice. "Men are sufficiently lawless, sufficiently selfish," said Lady Herbert, "to do many bad things; but they are so seldom lost to all respect for virtue, all love for their children's reputations, as to lead them to associate with the most dissolute of their sex." And then a reference to self filled up the horrid picture she drew, and with the tears coursing each other over her face, she added,

"Thus has he made poor Sarah spend the anniversary of his wedding-day; whilst I, I have spent it in loneliness, in bitterness of heart; in faith unchanged, in love—yes, in love—even now, when every tender affection has been trampled under foot."

Many hours were passed in this unrestrained indulgence of anguish, when she heard a knock at the door. It was Lord Herbert's knock. She started up; she hastily repressed her tears, those tears which he had so frequently and harshly rebuked; the candles were flickering in their sockets; she lit fresh ones, one hasty plunge of her face in cold water, a few stifled sobs, a fluttering at the heart, and then a deadly weight of its forced composure, and she tried to prepare for the decisive moment.

Lord Herbert was obliged to pass through her dressing-room to reach his own, unless he had gone round by the servant's staircase, and she listened intensely to know which way he came. His footsteps, though apparently treading lightly, as if he did not wish to be heard, approached nearer and nearer. He entered the chamber; a screen prevented his seeing her, and he was passing behind it into his own room, when Lady Herbert said,

"I wish to speak to you, Lord Herbert."

Lord Herbert came forward.

"La, Mabel! what, you up at this hour? Bless my soul, how dissipated you are! Pray make haste and tell me what you have to say, for I am confoundedly sleepy."

"I will tell you all, Herbert, as quickly as I can. But it is rather a long story, I confess; and a sad one."

She fixed her eyes on her husband's as she spoke. If he had been sleepy before, his wife's words and the tone in which they were uttered had the effect of scaring all drowsiness away; and he awaited in awkward silence for what she would next say.

There was a tremulous tenderness in Lady Herbert's voice, which usurped the place of its late solemn tone, as she went on speaking.

"Francis, you have forgotten that to-day was the anniversary of our wedding-day; but it is of little consequence now; and that you have passed it by unheeded does not surprise me, seeing how totally the event itself is forgotten; nay, has long been laid in abeyance by you. Do not interrupt me" (seeing he was about to speak.) "Suffer me once to say all I have to say; it is the first time I have ever



reproached you—it shall be the last:—I must recall to *your* remembrance, how I have loved you, and to *my own*, how you *once loved* me; for I still believe you *did* love me, for a time. You were a faithful husband, and according to the common acceptation of the word happiness, I had my complement of felicity. But a change came over you—I was *not* your sole object of interest—still you loved no one else, and I tried to fashion my feelings to the fashion of yours. At length I was told you were false to me—I believed it not. I framed excuses for apparent derelictions from the fidelity of married life; I blinded myself till I saw on the Lanti's arm, the jewel which confirmed my worst fears; proof was placed before me—I knew you had forsaken me for another. I charged you with having given the ruby heart to the Lanti—you denied the charge—you made out a tale which appeared plausible—at least, I was willing to think so; and again I believed you. Oh! Francis, your word was once to me, as the word of Heaven. I lulled myself again into a calm; I strove to forget the evidence of my own senses, and to see through your will. You asked me to have the Lanti at my parties; I consented; and, in the world's eye, was ridiculed for being a fool. Yes, Francis, by my own hirelings too; and worse than all, condemned by our own child, who is not of an age, or of a disposition to remain blind to such glaring facts. Under my own roof I have been dishonoured, insulted by my husband's mistress. In public again and again, I have passed you in earnest converse with that singer—but I had no right to tax you with farther charge; I could not convict you on the witness of the shopkeeper who showed me the costly ornaments, which were intended for her; so I went on enduring the ridicule of the world, and the sting of the indignity, hoping that the time would come, when my forbearance might touch you, and restore to me your love. These words are soon spoken; this tale is soon told; but the anguish endured, and the length of months and years over which it has exercised a ravage of my health, and the overthrow of my peace, cannot be computed. To sum up all—to-day, Francis, you took your daughter, our child, to spend the anniversary of our wedding-day, in the company of your mistress, a public singer, and another woman of bad character. This is an insult to the *mother* of your child, which she cannot pass over in silence, which she would be wrong to gloss over, which her conscience would

condemna her for suffering, if it is in her power to prevent its recurrence. Even the gay world sets boundaries to sin, though expediency sometimes removes them—and a father leading a child into vice purposely, and systematically, is condemned; but it is not the world's condemnation which influences the resolve I am come to. My own heart and principle condemns me to say, that we must part."

She ceased speaking. Lord Herbert had remained silent during the time his wife spoke; but it was now his turn to stand convicted or refute the charge; he preferred the latter.

"We must part! Mabel, do you repeat these words?—calmly, coolly, resolutely repeat them; or do you not rather repent of them already?"

Lady Herbert answered in a low suffocated voice—

"No, we must part."

"Then be it so; but first, Lady Herbert, I will tell *you* with what justice you have laid these transgressions to my door, and place before you your own fantastical views, which have, at all times, made you ridiculous, but which, at your age, must soon render you contemptible. To begin then by a recapitulation of our married life. Seventeen years ago, I loved you, you also acknowledged the fact, not perhaps, in the precise way demanded, because, simply, I was not romantic; to that crime I plead guilty. You acknowledge farther, that I was for many subsequent years a good husband; but that I gradually changed, became careless, indifferent, and absented myself from home. I deny that I was indifferent to you, but you made my home disagreeable to me: you wearied me with abuse of my male friends; nay, you gave me hints, sometimes, on the meanness of my pursuits, the mental degradation of my amusements; every exercise necessary to my health, every sport I took pleasure in, you vilified, sneered at, or openly abused; you made my home disagreeable to my old friends, consequently to me. Mabel, a man cannot stand that. You did every thing in short which could remind me that I had a dictatorial, fault-finding wife, instead of carrying on the delusion that you were still my gay, good-humoured love. It was yourself, Mabel, that did the mischief; you have no one to blame but yourself. I came to town to try what change of scene and place would effect; I left my own pleasures in the field, to afford you an opportunity of enjoying those which you seemed to prefer. But no, you followed the

same course of conduct in town, as at Moreton Park; you shut my doors to every one, except De Montmorenci, and you only admitted him, because he has some of the same prejudices as yourself. Then you have brought our child up in the romantic notions you entertain; she is the very prototype of yourself. You have wearied me with professions of excessive love, which you have never exemplified by any one act of obedience to my pleasure; finally, I grew tired of such palaver: still I was not harsh. Other houses were open to me; I met no bugbear in them, no tearful eye, no repressed sighs; but pleasant, joyous, straightforward society; and that society, I cultivated and enjoyed; but I never reproached you as being the cause of making me fly my own house; I suffered you to go on in your own sentimentalising way, with that grave gander, De Montmorenci, I gave you *carte blanche* for your expense. You have had the entire rule over Sarah; I have treated your *protégés*, the Clermonts, as though they had been my own relations, and I paid not the least attention to some whispers which have reached my ears, insinuating, that you preferred De Montmorenci to me; I never inquired into the fact, and now tell me, have I been too severe?"

"Severe! No, Herbert.—Harsh! No—you have been far worse; you have been wholly indifferent—and you have forsaken me for another."

Lord Herbert thought a moment, and then replied.

"Mabel, though I have never done so hitherto, it is now my part, in self-defence, to turn accuser."

"Lady Herbert shook her head mournfully, and said with a smile of disdain—

"You cannot—you dare not accuse me!"

"Softly, Mabel, do not deny the charge, before you hear it;"—and he paused, and looked in his wife's face with an expression of cunning malignity: "Lennard! Does that name say nothing to your conscience?" But, with her eyes fixed on his, she coloured not or quailed at the sound. "You told me yourself," he went on to say, "that Lennard made violent love to you,—*you* told me as much; but others, Lady Herbert, have seen you when together, have witnessed the way in which you received his attentions, and all those pretensions of finding fault with his constant visits, were *only pretences*. If, then, you choose to part from me, it shall not be a separation, but a divorce—think well of that—how would you like that Sarah's entrance

into the world, should be stigmatized with being the daughter of a divorced woman."

"Impossible! It cannot be; I fear no threats, for I have done no evil."

"Lennard tells a different tale."

"Wretch that he is!" faintly ejaculated Lady Herbert, overcome by indignation, and a sort of terror. "Wretch that he is, he can never blast my fair fame."

"Pardon me, Mabel, a woman's fame is soon withered, even where crime does not blast it: the very question of its being doubted, sullies its purity, and the examinations, of fending, and proving, which, in the case of such an event as our separating, must be gone through, would have precisely the same effect on the mind of the public." Lady Herbert trembled; her husband was aware that he had gained a vantage ground. Oh, miserable estate of woman! Whose very virtues make her shrink from having those virtues questioned before the multitude, how is it that in cases of quarrel between married persons, the wife is invariably the sufferer? a woman must bend to the storm, brave it she dare not.

Lord Herbert, after a pause, resumed.

"There is one condition, Mabel, however, which would make me forget all your injustice, all your mistaken violence; namely, if from this moment, you cease to goad me with reproaches, cease to abuse my friends and my pleasures, cease to mar my domestic comfort, and be once again, the gay good-humoured being I loved; we may yet make up the quarrel.—It is late in life to separate. The whole world will laugh at us, no one will care which of us is in the right, or which in the wrong, but they will all join in making us the food of their scandal, and their topic of conversation, to the entertainment of the many, and the sorrow of the few who may care for us; and what shall we gain by it? much trouble, some regret; for persons cannot part after seventeen years of marriage, and not feel the wrench; whereas, look at the reverse of the proposition; we forget our mutual grievances, real or imaginary, we do so for our daughter's sake. We both determine from this moment, to start afresh in life; we surely do not dislike one another, Mabel, and the anniversary of our wedding-day, may be a renewal of our first happy years. Mabel, dear Mabel, what do you say?" And he drew his wife to his heart, that heart which was wholly his own, and which had no power to resist him.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## A HOME SCENE.

If mine eyes do e'er declare,  
 They've seen a second thing that's fair,  
 Or ears, that they have music found  
 Besides thy voice, in *any* sound—  
 If all things that in nature are,  
 Either soft, or sweet, or fair,  
 Be not in thee so epitomised,  
 That nought material's not comprised—  
 May I as worthless seem to thee,  
 As all *but thou*, appear to me.

SIR JOHN SUCKLING.

*Scene, Lady Herbert's Bedroom—Time, the Morning  
 after the Reconciliation.*

It is years since that sleeper has slept such a calm sweet sleep, as she has slept this past night, and many have been the days to which she has awoke, with a sense of corroding sorrow, preying on her first thoughts. But this morning, how differently does it break for her! She has dreamt no *dream* of happiness, which vanishes before the truth of day; it is not one of those cherished illusions, which have visited her in the night season, with the mockery of felicity. But her husband has renewed his vows; again he has sworn to be faithful and affectionate to her alone. Once again, Mabel Herbert awakes to felicity; she utters a prayer of thanksgiving to the Giver of all good gifts; she looks up with all the joyousness and pride of being a happy wife. Yes, love's bandeau was again upon the eyes of Lady Herbert, and sixteen years of wedded life, and all the rude realities she had passed through, in that epoch, had not disenchanted her yet. She commenced, as it were, upon a new existence, though she trod the same path on which she had first entered the world, and her own beautiful truth of character was a guarantee to her, for that of her repentant husband's. Happiness possesses a reno-

vating power, which, like the virtues ascribed to the fabled secret of the philosopher, can endow the gifted with perpetual youth and joy.

The alteration in Lord Herbert's manner and appearance, his constant presence at home, and the blessed change which took place in his general conduct, could not fail to strike the observant Sarah Herbert; and she expressed this, some weeks after, to her mother.

"Now, mamma," she said, throwing her arms about her mother's neck; "*now* we are happy again; how delightful papa *can be* when he chooses."

"He is always delightful in my eyes," replied Lady Herbert.

"Not so in mine, mamma—at least, he has not always been."

"Hush, hush, my child, I shall not love you, if you say so."

"Oh, if he always goes on as he does now, that will do, I shall love him then, almost as well as you, but if he"—

"I desire you, Sarah, not to allow your tongue to utter a disrespectful word against your father; it is the only thing I could not forgive."

"Well, mamma, dearest, you know I shall love him, so long as he loves you."

At Herbert house, there was now assembled every evening, a happy family party: Captain Danesford, and Mr. Clermont, and Lord de Montmorenci, were the only visitors who came habitually, and without fail; two or three of Lord Herbert's other friends occasionally joined them; music, and drawing, and chess, were alternately resorted to for amusement, and Lady Herbert drew whilst her husband was engaged in playing at chess with Miss Clermont; her brother was again indulging in the dangerous pleasure of listening to Miss Herbert, whilst she sang, and Captain Danesford hung over Miss Clermont's chair, watching the game apparently, but in reality more hopelessly enamoured than ever.

Mean while, was Miss Clermont living in a state of torpor? Was she alone, of all the persons living in, and breathing this atmosphere of love, exempt from its thralldom? Was she the only one who made no sacrifice to love's shrine? Far from it; there was, perhaps, none, who, under an exterior of freedom, endured a heavier bondage than Anna Clermont. Whom did she love? *Not*

the one whom Lady Herbert imagined to be the object of her passion; not the person who had excited Sarah Herbert's suspicions—the man for whom she felt the sentiment was not, at that time, himself aware of it. Lord de Montmorenci also appeared to be without an interest among the group. He seemed absorbed in a book, and scarcely looked up when Miss Herbert asked him how he liked the music which she had just been singing; where his thoughts were, none can say, and when once Miss Herbert rose from the instrument, and went unperceived to the back of his chair, looking over the book he held, she saw that it was turned upside down, and said, laughing,

"I have heard of some people, I forget what nation, who write from right to left, but I never before heard of any one who read upside down."

Lord de Montmorenci laughed, but he coloured, and was confused; saying, he had ridden all day, and was tired, and the fact is, he added,

"I was near asleep."

This excuse passed current with all except Miss Clermont, but she whispered in his ear,

"You were awake in the region of your thoughts, but where that region is, who can presume to say—shall I guess?"

"Pray do."

"So I will, and so I have done, only I am too much your friend to tell you my guess," and she walked away, to another part of the room, and resumed her seat, but Miss Herbert called her, to join in a duet, and she replied,

"I must first checkmate Lord Herbert, and then I will come; three moves will do it."

"How provoking!" he exclaimed, pushing over the chess-men, "I had so much the best of the game."

"Well, my lord, if that idea consoles you for defeat, you are welcome to retain it; I aspire to conquer, and if I succeed, that is all I care about;" she looked in a very peculiar manner at Lord Herbert, as she spoke. There is an electricity in the eye, which communicates itself to that of others, and his were fastened upon her with an expression of curiosity, which seemed to ask, "What do you mean?" But Miss Clermont went to the pianoforte, and commenced the duet Miss Herbert had asked her to play with her. Lord Herbert, truly alive to the power of music,

listened attentively, and turned the leaves of the score. From time to time, Lady Herbert looked up from her drawing, and thought, "how happy I am, that he should so love his daughter!" The music over, Mr. Clermont contrived to draw Miss Herbert into another apartment, by requesting her to look at some stuffed birds, which he had ordered to be brought to offer to her assistance in executing some ornamental illuminations for an album. Nothing could be more brilliant than their dyes, and she admired them; but said,

"You must forgive me for adding, that I cannot accept them; I dislike looking at all objects of natural curiosity, which are thus preserved in cases; the mockery of life is painful to me. After the first moment of admiring their hues, the next is a sensation of—what right had I to deprive these beautiful creatures of life, of enjoyment; to transfix them with pins, or to stick their bodies with glue on a piece of wood?"

Mr. Clermont replied, laughing, "You did not do it; besides, most of these birds died a natural death. I attempted to bring them over to you alive, and they died on their passage. Ah! Miss Herbert, I could live and die for you; I told you so when I went away—I tell you so now; once more forgive me, but while there is life, there is hope; and though I am now, beneath you, yet bid me only hope, and I shall achieve such deeds of glory as will raise me even to dare to aspire to *you*."

He had caught her hand as he spoke; he had gazed at her with that genuine expression of a real passion, which is at once humble, yet bold. Miss Herbert could not but be touched by his sincerity—his ardour; her colour went and came—she was for a moment silent; then resuming her self-possession, she replied,

"Dear Mr. Clermont, I feel for you the affection of a sister; but were you a crowned monarch, I should never feel more. I never could become your wife."

There was that ingenuous sincerity of voice and manner in these few decisive words, which told him the decree was irreversible—he dropped her hand, and only replied,

"Forgive me." Then shortly after, commanded himself sufficiently to bid Lady Herbert good night, and left the house. Miss Herbert remained downcast, and it was evident something had occurred to vex her.

Miss Clermont said to her, "I regret what has passed; how ridiculous my poor brother is! I wonder how he can



have been such a fool—only every body is a fool who is in love. It is a fact we all see, or may see, every day of our lives.”

Their conversation was interrupted by the announcement of Sir Charles Lennard. He had not paid a visit at Herbert House for so long a time, that every body seemed astonished when he came in. He entered, however, in his accustomed tranquil manner, and inquired for Lady Herbert's health with much affected interest, declared that he had been out of town, or should have done so more frequently.

She only bowed coldly. Lord Herbert did not appear more happy to see him than his wife, but he talked to him on various subjects, and seemed anxious to engage his attention, and to render himself agreeable. Lord de Montmorenci scarcely returned him any answer when he addressed him; and shortly after Sir Charles's arrival, Lady Herbert retired, and her other visitors also. So Sir Charles and Lord Herbert were left alone together.

The sight of Sir Charles Lennard had been to Lord Herbert, what that of the serpent is said to be to the bird it is luring to destruction. There is certainly an instinct bestowed upon us at sight of particular persons to warn us of the approach of danger; it is stronger than reason—it is past finding out, but it exists; and wo betide those who condemn it as superstitious! Lady Herbert sat before her toilet unable to commence undressing. She wondered what could have brought Sir Charles Lennard again into her presence. She wondered still more what could induce her husband to receive him with so much forced cordiality, for his cordiality *was* forced. I wish, she thought, he would tell me all—all the secret transactions which exist between him and that bad and unprincipled man; and she shuddered as her remembrance was carried back to the period before the few last happy weeks. Again she tried to drive these thoughts away, to shut them out for ever; but Sir Charles Lennard's image—Sir Charles Lennard's voice resounded in her ear, and the anxious beating of her heart, which had of late been hushed to peace, now came again, and, with a degree of terror she neither could control nor wholly account for, she determined to go down to the dining-room under, under pretence of looking for a book, but with a determination to remain there till she should oblige him to leave the house.

As she approached the door, she heard her husband's

voice in loud and angry tone, and distinctly heard him pronounce the Lanti's name; she paused a moment, but was too noble to condescend to listen; she opened the door hastily, and apologized for intrusion, saying it was so late, she had no idea that Sir Charles was still in the house.

He bowed and smiled sarcastically, spoke of the pleasure he felt in being once more in Lord Herbert's society, which had made him forget the hour, but Lord Herbert seemed rather pleased when his wife sat down, and apparently resolved to wait his friend's departure. The conversation soon flagged, and Sir Charles Lennard at length took his leave; but first turned to Lord Herbert, and, looking at him with a very peculiar expression, said,

"I may depend upon you, then, to-morrow at twelve, at Tattersall's."

Lord Herbert nodded.

The other replied, "Herbert, you did not mistake me?"

"No; I did not—I shall meet you at the hour appointed."

"Would to God you would never meet that man again!" ejaculated Lady Herbert, when he had shut the door after him.

"Come, Mabel, remember, do not fall back from your good resolves; no abuse of my friends."

"Never of *your friends*," she replied, and then passing her arm through his, she said no more.

A message from Lord Herbert, requesting to see Miss Clermont the next morning in his study, surprised and agitated her. What can he have to say to me? she thought, and the curiosity she experienced was painful. When she found herself in his presence, she asked him, with a trembling voice, what were his commands with her?

"Commands! dear Miss Clermont, that is an unusual style of language between you and I; pray sit down, and do not agitate yourself; but perhaps you can already guess the subject on which I am about to address you."

"I have not the slightest idea to what you can allude."

"I must, then, inform you, that I am an ambassador in favour of another, who only waits the slightest encouragement to plead his own cause; but who, thinking that I might more coolly explain the less interesting, but yet necessary parts of such a business, applied to me, as to one who has ever, I trust, acted towards you in the character of a father, to make known to you, not his attachment so much,

(for who can speak for a lover on that score?) but the particulars of his fortune and situation, which, thrown into the scale of affection, might possibly weigh with you in ultimately consenting to his suit."

Lord Herbert paused; he looked earnestly in Miss Clermont's face, thought he had never observed before that her features were chiselled, as it were, by the sculptor's art, and the absence of all rosy tint whatever gave her beauty still more the effect of a statue.

"Can you really not guess who has commissioned me to plead this cause? Does nothing tell you that Captain Danesford loves, has loved you from the first moment he beheld you; nay, before even he ever saw you? Your brother's praises had already made him embody all his ideas of female perfection in you. Yes, Miss Clermont, it is even so. Now listen to me, in quality of a grave old man; one who considers you as a daughter; Captain Danesford's character, the estimation in which he is held by all in his profession, the title and fortune which must in the course of nature speedily become his—his uncle dying without children, and being near ninety—makes this young man, what is called in the world, an excellent match—and one that few disengaged hearts would refuse. What do you say, Miss Clermont?—will you lend a patient ear to his suit?—may I give him hope?"

"No hope whatever, my lord, of my accepting Captain Danesford as a husband; doubtless, many persons would gladly avail themselves of the advantages your lordship has enumerated, independent of the attachment which Captain Danesford is good enough to express in so flattering a manner towards me; but I can say at once, with perfect knowledge of my own unchangeable determination, that I never will become the wife of Captain Danesford—nor do I think I ever shall of any one else."

Lord Herbert laughed: "However much you may feel sure of the first declaration, allow me to say, you had best not make any rash vows in respect of the latter part of your determination, for then you know you might be guilty of breaking a resolve which would afford detractors matter for ridicule, and your friends regret that you should do so; but before I report your answer to Danesford, I must beg you to take four-and-twenty hours to think of it."

"Any thing, Lord Herbert, to please you; but four-and-twenty years instead of hours will make no difference in my resolve."

"What! so very determined; nay, then, there must be something more in your refusal than a mere rejection on the score of fancy. You would not, charming as you are, throw away such decided advantages as those which present themselves in the proposed alliance with Captain Danesford, without *some* strong motive—Anna Clermont, your heart is thrall'd."

Her cheeks and neck were dyed in blushes, as she looked up, and said,

"If it is so, I am unconscious of the fact."

"Come, tell me at once, Miss Clermont, tell me who has engaged your affections? and who ever it is, I will do all in my power to render you happy in your choice."

"I can tell you nothing, for the most simple of all reasons, that I have nothing to tell."

The door opened, and Captain Danesford was announced. A great awkwardness ensued; but Lord Herbert made some apology to leave the room, and shut the door so quickly after him, that Miss Clermont had not time to do what she wished—to follow him. She checked the impulse, therefore, which made her rise from her seat, and Captain Danesford, with that impetuosity which was natural to him, rushed towards her, and besought her to listen to him. His declaration was brief but impassioned; he pleaded his cause in an honest, sailor-like way that merited to meet with a better return; but Miss Clermont steadily, and at once put an end to his hopes. He said he would not reproach her with having sometimes induced him to flatter himself that she was not altogether indifferent to him; that her having confided to him certain circumstances relative to the Herbert family, had led him to suppose she honoured him with her confidence, and then he urged his suit in every possible way; but she turned off all those insinuations of her having encouraged him, by saying, that she had ever felt, and must always feel, a friendship for her brother's friend; but as to love, she knew nothing about it, and never intended to marry.

Captain Danesford's disappointment was too vivid not to betray itself in the most forcible manner, and even the calm self-possession of Miss Clermont was disturbed by his passionate lamentations. She remained firm, however, to her refusal; and at last bade him farewell, with expressions of good will, but such expressions are no consolation at the moment to those who feel a deeper interest.

When Miss Clermont was alone in her apartment, she asked herself—"Have I acted wisely in refusing him? I fear perhaps not. I have contemned the certainty of being honourably loved—for the chance of what? Of gaining affections which I ought not to possess, and which I shall probably never obtain, or, if I do, it must be stealthily, like a thief—liable to disgrace if detected, and perhaps, at all events, to crime and sorrow. Very likely, Captain Danesford, some years hence, I may repent of having refused your offer; very likely you will live to see Anna Clermont humbled in the dust; but still I could not—no, I could not marry Captain Danesford—that rough, ugly man. Oh! no. And in the mean time I am free to weave a web of doubtful tissue, a mixture of hues of dazzling brightness and of darkest gloom."

Notwithstanding that such thoughts as these occupied Miss Clermont's mind after her rejection of Captain Danesford, still she was not so hard-hearted as to be without all sentiment of remorse at knowing secretly that she had given him encouragement in order to obtain her own end, and some regret at the pain and disappointment she had inflicted. She was still meditating on this subject, when her brother knocked at the door, and she was obliged to admit him. He looked peculiarly grave.

"I am come, Anna," he said, "to talk to you very seriously, for I have much to distress me; and before I take leave of you, it is my duty to speak to you without reserve."

His sister trembled inwardly, but she answered in a manner she wished should appear unembarrassed.

"What means this solemn preface, Fred.? pray sit down and talk to me."

"Anna, I am much concerned at your conduct towards Capt. Danesford—not so much at your rejection of him as your husband, though that grieves me, for I am sure he would have made you *honourably* happy; but I am mortified beyond the force of words to express, to think my sister should have acted such a heartless part. You have given Danesford every encouragement only to gratify your vanity; and though you *are* my sister, and *very dear to me*, I cannot deny that I conceive you have wronged my friend; and when he asked me to tell him if I considered him mistaken in having supposed you had held out hopes to his suit, I could not but say that he *was* justified in having

thought so. All this is very humbling to me as your brother; but it is not the only cause I have for feeling humbled. Anna, I must know the *reasons* which have led to your refusal of Danesford."

"Is it not sufficient reason that I do not love him?"

"No; for you *would* love him if you loved none other."

"That is a false conclusion. Whom do I love—whom can I love?"

"Nay, this is an evasive reply; answer me directly to the point, and take care that your answer be true. I have your interests at heart—they are dear to me as my own, and dearer; therefore confide in me, I adjure you."

Miss Clermont endeavoured to appear calm, and to conceal her agitation at these questions; but they were home ones—they were not to be passed over; and it required all her presence of mind to frame an answer—she had only one course to pursue, and she pursued it boldly.

"No, Frederick," she answered determinedly, "I love no one—neither does any one—seek my love; but I do not, nor ever did, love Captain Danesford. I like him as an agreeable person; I had a friendship for him because he was your friend, but that is all."

"If that is really *all*, I am satisfied in the great object of my life—that of knowing my sister to be innocent."

"Innocent! Frederick, what can you mean?"

"Anna, in a few days I am to sail again. I leave you—and hitherto I have done so in perfect confidence; but now," and he looked at her with a doubtful expression, then burst forth again. "Well, Anna, I must believe you; for you should remember there will soon be no one to warn you from the danger I fear for you; no one to tell you the plain, unvarnished truth—when you do wrong or when you *meditate* wrong; and if you do not seek guidance of a higher power than any earthly one, you will not steer your course aright. You are among shoals and sunken rocks; would to heaven I could remain and pilot you through them! but that is impossible. Nay, listen to me, sister, be not impatient; who knows if I may ever be able to give you advice again! Lady Herbert has been a mother to you—I may say to both of us; Sarah loves you, Anna; Lord Herbert (and his voice changed its tone) *has been* to you as a guardian and friend—they all trust in you: think what an honourable thing it is *to be trusted*. Continue to deserve that confidence, I beseech you, which they repose in you; prove not a wasp in the nest

of their peace. I grieve to say their peace at all events rests on insecure ground; the anchorage is bad—come a storm, the ship may break from her moorings, and then who can say?—but Lady Herbert and her child are such angels! Yes, yes, they will be protected. One word more, and I have done—it is not enough that you should be guiltless, you must avoid even the appearance of evil. Abstain from exercising power when you have no due authority for so doing; let your manner to Lord Herbert be respectful, but reserved; there are many persons who would be glad to cast a reproach upon you. Sir Charles Lennard is one—beware of him; but, above all, beware of your own heart—search it well to know if there be any lurking wish to obtain an undue influence over the husband of her who has been to you as a mother.”

“Frederick,” replied his sister, haughtily, “how dare you accuse me of such a heinous design? If such is your opinion of me, I never desire to hold sisterly communion with you again. What! do you suppose I am so lost to all principle—all feeling of gratitude, as to seek the love of another woman’s husband, and that woman Lady Herbert? Frederick! to what unknown source can I trace this suspicion of evil in your own sister? You have put such horrible thoughts in my mind, that it will be very long before I can recover the shock, or forget that it is my brother who has vilified and insulted me.”

“Anna, dear, forgive me; but I could not leave you without probing you to the quick, or with a shadow of doubt resting upon me respecting your unsullied honour. Such a doubt would have stood between me and my duty—it would have unnerved my arm—it would have bewildered my brain; but now, dearest sister, that you have with your own lips denied every tittle of the vile slander, I shall be myself again—the thought of you shall be as pleasant to me as it has ever been! and if I can but discover the being who traduced you”—

“Oh!” said Miss Clermont, interrupting him, “our secret enemies should be despised—they are beneath notice.”

He shook his head. “Despise them, yes; but look sharp to their manœuvres. An enemy must never be despised; as at sea, so on shore.”

A few more sentences expressive of brotherly interest on the one part, and affirmations of innocence on the other and Frederick Clermont and his sister parted.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## A GATHERING STORM.

When I know that your heart is another's,  
That our wishes can never agree,  
That a flame in your bosom still hovers,  
Which never, never was kindled by me;  
Perhaps in your heart you may trace,  
Some soft intermediate degree,  
Between friendship and love, some fond space  
If there be such, ah! Give it to me.

OLD SONG.

SHORTLY after Mr. Clermont and Captain Danesford's departure, Miss Herbert and Miss Clermont were sitting alone together one evening, the former reading, but she was not so intent on her book as not to observe that her companion, who was writing, commenced a hundred times the first words of a letter, and then tore it into pieces; at last, she laughed at the spiteful way in which Miss Clermont destroyed every fresh sheet of paper, and said,

"Well, Anna, how much trouble it costs you to write your first love-letter."

Miss Clermont blushed; you are very inquisitive, Sarah, I dare say you could assist me in its composition; I make no doubt you are fully competent to the task of love-letter writing—but my letter was not of love."

"Well, whatever it was about, it must be something very interesting, for I never saw you in such difficulty before to compose a note."

"May be so, but mine is not about love, I repeat; however, restrain your curiosity, for it shall not be satisfied."

"Do you repent your cruelty to poor Captain Danesford?" (Miss Herbert went on with girlish pertinacity to say,)

"I dare say he has not sailed yet; doubtless he will come back from Plymouth at a word's notice—shall I tell papa to write to him for you?"



"Sarah—Miss Herbert, I am really angry with you, and shall be more so, if you trouble your papa with such nonsense; it is not friendly, it is not maidenly in you to persist in joking me upon a subject which you are aware is disagreeable to me."

"Oh, well, Anna, now that I see you are serious, I shall not torment you more; but tell me, for you have great influence with papa, what has come over him these last few days; he has relapsed into all his old ways: since the day Sir Charles Lennard came to us he has never been himself, and poor mamma, I have only to look in her face, to see that she is again miserable; why do you not discover the mystery that exists between papa and Sir Charles? They do not like each other, and yet something seems to tie them together, in a way that neither can break."

"Miss Herbert,—you ought not to allow yourself to speak thus disrespectfully of your parent; you ought not to see his faults, if he has any."

"Nonsense, Anna; when I was a very little girl you might talk so to me; although even then, I knew (for children are quick-sighted) that he behaved ill; and roughly and crossly to mamma very often, and that his frowns and angry looks to her were not concealed by the smirks and smiles and soft words he uttered to you or others, who came unexpectedly into the room; do you suppose that even then, I did not see his glances to the Lanti, and many other ladies before the Lanti,—to be sure I did; but within the last two years, *you know* I knew every thing—ah, if all husbands behave so, I never wish to marry. It is enough to make one deceitful, to see how papa goes on; and even his love for me, what is it—a sort of thing more like instinct than any tender feeling; and not even that, for the animals defend their young, and *he* takes me into danger. No, no—I have loved, I do love him still, but I am no longer cheated, and it is enough to spoil any character, to live in the constant knowledge of being deceived; it almost makes one deceitful oneself."

"I wish, Miss Herbert, you would never talk thus to me; I have frequently told you, I am the last person who ought to hear such conversation; if you must have a confidant, why do you not choose Lord de Montmorenci? Yet let me advise you to ascribe your father's conduct to any motive rather than to a wrong one."

"I repeat to you, that it is impossible, Anna, to be blind

to facts which influence the hourly happiness of those we love most—you know we cannot serve two masters; and either I must love mamma, and blame papa, or love papa, and not care about mamma. One or other of these effects must be the result of what is passing before my eyes.”

“And to how many young persons does Miss Herbert’s reasoning not apply? all very young people do not theoretically reason like her, it is true; but then what is worse still, they come to a practical conclusion, regarding certain delinquencies, which, perhaps, fatally govern their whole lives, and they conclude, that similar offences are the common practice of those older than themselves; and they only await the hour of emancipation to go and do the same, or any other thing, which their passions or their fancies may suggest—‘He is an excellent fellow, he never did harm to any one but himself,’ is the most dangerous and false, and yet the most common of axioms. No one can do harm to themselves alone; we are all tied together by some imperceptible chain, which renders us amenable to others for our example.”

Miss Herbert certainly did not find the consolation she sought, in communing with Anna Clermont, for either the latter wholly checked the outpourings of that young and innocent creature’s mind, or else she endeavoured to throw a false light upon subjects which could not admit of such deception; so that gradually, Miss Herbert’s affectionate heart became closed to that open ingenuous development of her thoughts and feelings, which at first she had displayed towards her companion, and the impossibility of speaking freely to her mother on the one subject which so nearly concerned them both, compelled her to take refuge in that secretive reserve which was contrary to her nature, but which is acquired involuntarily, in similar positions, and which, in some degree, impaired the ingenuous beauty of her character. All these evils grew out of her parent’s fault; Lord de Montmorenci was aware of the gradual undermining of principle and of happiness, which was slowly but surely making its way in the family, and his natural seriousness had deepened into gloom. Miss Herbert was the first to perceive this, and she rallied him as to the cause, declaring he must have fallen in love. Instead of answering her playfully, as was his wont, he replied gravely, that in as far as he was acquainted with himself, he should never either be in love, nor marry. There was a

quiet sadness in his manner of speaking, which touched Miss Herbert, and she dropped the subject; but after a pause she entered upon another, fully as painful to him; she adverted to her father's temporary return to his family, during Sir Charles Lennard's absence, and to his reappearance. "Since which time," she said, "every thing has been as bad as ever. Do you not know," resumed Miss Herbert, fixing her eyes on Lord de Montmorenci, "what it is that gives that man such power over papa? and why do you, who are his real friend, not counteract it, whatever it may be, since most assuredly it is an evil one?"

"I lament hearing you, Miss Herbert, say such things; you ought, at your age, to be ignorant of all evil; least of all, ought you to suspect its existence there, where honour and love is most due from you."

"*Ought* is one thing, Lord de Montmorenci, but action is another; you know as well as I do, that what exists in our family, is *not what ought* to exist; and you must be aware, that loving mamma as I do, I am daily more wretched on her account; can *you* do nothing for her?"

Lord de Montmorenci thrown off his guard, replied,

"I would gladly lay down my life, to secure Lady Herbert's happiness; but happiness or misery is not delegated to mortal hands; we may be the intermediate agents, by which either is distributed; but we are only agents in the business, instigated and employed by power supreme. At present I can do nothing; but if a watchful eye, and willing heart, be permitted to ward off sorrow from Lady Herbert and from you, then surely you may reckon upon me as one most zealous to do you service."

"You speak like the oracles of old, mystically; and I, like those to whom these oracles spake, am willing to believe you in the pleasurable sense you wish that I shall understand your words—but, Lord De Montmorenci, a truce to this hide and seek of thoughts; let me, I adjure you, speak openly to one person, who is my friend, and in whom I *may* confide. Anna Clermont, either from an idea of duty, or from some other motive which I cannot devise, will not listen to me; she checks me whenever I would disburden my heart, and at last my feelings towards her are undergoing a change; I no longer feel any relief in talking to her: she is not open with me, I cannot be so with her. As to my own dear mamma, ah! that is the sad story of all; I

cannot, from the nature of the trouble which affects me, I cannot talk to her of it. I feel sometimes as if I should go mad, as if I was more painfully situated than ever young girl was before."

Lord de Montmorenci sighed deeply. "I wish," he said, "that you were the only one in a similar position; but believe me, Miss Herbert," and he took her hand affectionately, "there is no trial comes to any of us, which has not come to others, and though we are apt to say and to feel, 'never was there such a grief as mine,' that is a delusion proceeding from self-love. Nevertheless, I do acknowledge there are some unusually disagreeable circumstances attending upon your lot: you must pray to be guided safely through them; and I again and again conjure you to believe, that I am not competent to give you advice or counsel, and implore you to spare me from a task so above my power."

"What! Lord de Montmorenci, as my guardian, will you not suffer me to appeal to you—will you not allow me to ask what papa has done with all the money he got from me? It could not be procured for mamma's benefit, and if he has any bad associates who rob him, can you not warn him of these?"

"Miss Herbert, you can hardly be aware how difficult it is for one man to speak to another in the way of counsel, unless he is requested to do so, or at least has some opening given him, to enter upon so delicate a subject. Now I have observed, that instead of affording me such an opportunity, Lord Herbert has appeared distressed whenever we have been one minute alone together, so that I have scrupulously avoided offending him in that way, knowing that it would do no good. Believe me, I must stand aloof. I will watch over yours, and your mother's interests; I have done so; but unless some signal evil, which I trust may never occur, should happen, I must not, I dare not tax Lord Herbert with my advice."

"Well, I suppose I must be satisfied with your answer; but I only beg you to remark, that the few weeks during which papa seemed to take pleasure in our society, Sir Charles Lennard never was with us. The very moment he came papa left us, and we have seldom seen him since; when we have, he has been cross, and found fault with poor dear mamma as usual. I must and will know, what power that man has over him."

After these, and similar conversations, Lord de Montmorenci's countenance betrayed so much of distressed thought, that Lady Herbert could not fail of remarking, that he was unusually grave. One day as he was walking with her on Hampstead Heath—Miss Clermont and Miss Herbert being engaged in sketching from those old firs, which formed once, probably, an avenue, and give a picturesque effect to the landscape.—Lady Herbert sat down on a bank, and Lord de Montmorenci placed himself by her. There is a freedom of thought, which seems given peculiarly to the open air, to the country, and in scenes of nature. It is then a sort of sullenness and sin against nature's self, not to be natural. So casting off her usual reserve, a reserve she had constrained herself to wear, Lady Herbert asked her companion to tell her the cause of his habitual gravity; "a gravity," she said, "almost, at times, amounting to gloom; and surely there must be some cause why you should continue an unmarried man—make me your confidant," she added;

"I have a particular reason for requesting you to do so."

Lord de Montmorenci looked at her very earnestly, and paused for a moment ere he replied; then having read her thoughts, he answered:

"Your taking any interest in me or my concerns, must always be grateful to my feelings; and perhaps it is best, lest you ascribe any unfavourable cause to the habitual seriousness of my deportment, that I should answer you without disguise; my story is soon told; there is not much romance in it, but a painful reality that lowers the tone of my existence to a very flat key. You know I was too early in life my own master, and in possession of my estate? I say too early, for although I have made a less bad use of that power than some might have done, still I have not done half what I might of good, and the certain knowledge which I early proved, that wealth does not necessarily ensure happiness, though it may be the means of promoting it, has made these advantages pall upon me, so that in the midst of wealth I am in penury. I know that many would accuse me of falsehood, or affectation, when I say this, but *you* will understand and believe me. Well, Lady Herbert, though only six years older than Herbert, by some unaccountable fancy of his father's, he made me his guardian, and this threw us much together of course, and our

boyish sports endeared us to each other. Happy days! When the business of life was pleasure—innocent health ensuring pleasure—and when life itself lay like a flowery parterre before our view. But what is the first danger that crosses our path? The smiling, unsuspected stranger, love! but too soon, no more a stranger, but the veriest tyrant that ever ruled with a despotic sway. My aunt, Lady —, was still a very handsome woman: she had two daughters: both were beautiful; but the youngest was the one that seemed to prefer me, and I was snared long before I knew that my happiness was in her keeping. But between two young persons, against whose love there was no apparent barrier, the mutual sentiment was soon disclosed; and after a year of constant intimacy, I told my love; I was accepted by my beloved; I hastened to her mother, Lady —, with a sanguine hope of obtaining her consent, for she had always appeared to like me, and to encourage my intimacy with her daughters; but a cold chill came over me, which to this day I remember still, when she replied, ‘My dear Claude, I can have no objection to you, I should be proud and happy to see my nephew become my son-in-law, but *at present* I am under the necessity of telling you, your marriage with Henrietta cannot take place, and it will therefore be better that you cease to frequent her society or come to my house, unless it be to see me, from time to time.’ I will not pretend to give you, Lady Herbert, an analysis of my feelings; but at that time I was impetuous, I was young, I loved for the first time. I besought Lady — to confide in me, to tell me the reason why she banished me from her society, if she would not tell me that which made me deny my suit; but all was in vain, she remained inexorable, and only replied, “A mother is not accountable to any one for her conduct respecting her children, and a mother only can be a judge of what is best for her daughter’s happiness.” It was in vain, that I besought her to tell me if there was any point in my character, or temper, or conduct, that she disapproved; she assured me there was not. I then besought her to allow me one interview with Henrietta; but she refused; and at length wounded, indignant, and irritated by her conduct, I determined to convey a letter to my love, and to entreat her to afford me a parting meeting, before we yielded to these harsh and unjust commands; and we did meet, and

swore eternal constancy, and determined to wear out Lady ——'s objections, by our patient but firm endurance, and if this could not be, to marry in despite of her refusal. A very little aliment will serve to feed a sincere passion; an occasional letter from Henrietta—a stolen glance—a pressure of the hand in some public crowd, a thousand fanciful links in the chain of our probation, sufficed to make the anguish of that absence, to me, pleasurable. At last, I thought there was a change in the style of Henrietta's letters; and it was in vain that I hovered round her footsteps when in public, she evidently sought to avoid me. For a few weeks I endured this change as best I could; sometimes I wrote in anger, but always in love. My letters remained unanswered. At last, one day, I received a packet, it was bulky: I closed my door carefully, I desired that no one might be admitted to me: I prepared to enjoy my treasure with a sense of hallowing secrecy; but when I tore open the seals, and beheld my own letters, my presents, the lock of my hair, my picture, and a thousand trivial, but heart-rending memorials of my passion, I knew that all was over: but how was it over, why was it over? Had I done any thing to deserve to lose her love? had I offended? If I had, there was no abject repentance I would not make, there was nothing I would not do to regain her favour. But when the first shock passed away, and that I had strictly looked into my own breast, I knew the fault was not there; and I sat for some time in a state of stupor, not knowing whether I should express my resentment, or pass over in silent sorrow, a conduct which I could only view with indignation. My eyes were mechanically following the pattern of the carpet, when I espied a little blue note, which in my haste I had overlooked, among the scattered fragments of letters and records strewn in abundance over the floor; I seized it, and read words never to be forgotten.

“ ‘ Dear de Montmorenci, I can hardly bring myself to tell you, that we must never, in future, think of each other but as friends. Had mamma allowed us to marry, I am sure we should have been happy; but as she would not, it was folly in me to pine for ever for you, and it was wrong in me to prevent your thinking of another, when so many were anxious to accept your hand. I gradually, therefore, listened to the suit of Sir Richard Digby, and am shortly to

be married to him. I hope we shall meet as friends ought to do, for I shall always be your affectionate cousin,

“ ‘HENRIETTA.’ ”

“ Disgusted, and I blush to confess it, infuriated at this heartless ending to my sincere attachment, I vowed to forget so unworthy an object, to tear her at once and for ever from a heart she did not deserve, and a thousand other sensible resolves, none of which I could put in execution; for, that night I was seized with a brain fever, which nearly terminated my existence. It was during this malady that Herbert showed me so much attention and affection, that I felt bound to him for life; but, strange to say, one more adventure connected with my unhappy attachment yet awaited me. I was only just recovering from fever, and in a state of almost childish weakness, when I was informed that a lady desired to speak to me; I was at the moment lying on my couch, between sleeping and waking, and I answered, not knowing what I said, “ Let her enter.” The door was opened noiselessly; my eyes were still closed, when a soft familiar voice said, ‘ My dear nephew,’ and I felt the pressure of Lady ——’s hand on mine. I started—I rose up—I gazed at her, but from positive weakness sunk down again; my impulse was to have left the room, but my inability to move obliged me to remain. ‘ My dear nephew,’ she again resumed, ‘ I have been miserable about you: I felt that you would not see me if I sent up my name, and it is really a duty I owe myself and you, to explain, what must have appeared to you harsh and unwarrantable in my behaviour—do not speak,’ she said, observing I was about to do so, ‘ I will tell you all, and then leave you to judge me. It must be a sense of duty alone which can induce a parent to disparage her own child; but that duty I owe to you, and I owe to another who claims all my parental love, who is an angel. De Montmorenci, attend to what I am about to say: Henrietta never was worthy of you;—of a light and changeable mind, one attachment was always at hand to drive out another, and Heaven grant she may not now bring us all to disgrace! Sophia, on the contrary, was the very being calculated to have made you blessed: of a serious cast of mind, loving retreat and study, highly religious and reflective, she would have been to you all that you thought to find in the light airy Henrietta; and to the misery of Sophia, before she was aware of the nature of the passionate attachment which was growing in her heart, that



attachment was rooted there for life. I saw her health declining, her very faculties were impaired by the intensity of her feelings and her desire to conceal them. I could not plunge a death-blow in the heart of one true and faithful and virtuous child, in order to gratify the passing fancy of another; so I temporized, and, as you know, finally put off your marriage with Henrietta; but having done so, I winked at the little arts she used to maintain your love, and so long as I thought her really in love with you I forgave you both; but as I foresaw Henrietta's wild and wandering fancy was soon weaned from the persevering constancy of a true passion, and after a short time, Sir Richard Digby was her accepted lover; then, indeed, and then for the first time, I commanded her to send you back every letter and token of your attachment. The tidings of your illness soon reached us, and I heard it with unfeigned sorrow; but there is *one* who has been nearly reduced to the same sad state as yourself—poor Sophia! And Lady D—— put her handkerchief to her eyes; I was much affected myself, but totally unable from weakness, to reply; I could only say, 'My dear aunt, spare me now, when I am recovered, I will see you before I leave England.'

"Long after she left the room, my head turned round, and my brain was so inflamed, I felt as if bars of hot iron were pressing me. Had Lady D—— told me truth, or was the story a fabrication, or had Henrietta been wiled into giving me up? This was a dreadful doubt, it threw me again into a relapse; but my youth and strength prevailed, and I rallied and got well. I determined to call on Lady D—— and tax her with my suspicions, and though a detection of her having used fraud towards me, would have in fact maddened me afresh, still I was determined to have no doubt left on my mind. When I found myself once again in the apartment where I had gone through a whole history of love with Henrietta, where every piece of furniture, every mirror that had reflected her image, gave me back a faithful portraiture of those delusive moments, I was nearly betraying a woman's weakness, but the actual presence of Henrietta, accompanied by her mother, restored me at once to self-possession. Henrietta coloured, but spoke with a firm gay voice, congratulated me on being recovered; said, offering me her hand, 'You must not hate me, my good cousin, you must forgive me a mistake I made, and allow me to present you to Sir Richard, who is pre-

pared to honour and to love you.' Her manner, her words confirmed me in self-composure; I replied to her in the same strain she had spoken to me. I thought I could perceive she was piqued to know that her power was at an end: I despised her for it. The remainder of our conversation was constrained and disagreeable; but just as I was preparing to make my bow, Sophia entered leaning on Sir Richard's arm. A presentation took place, an awkward congratulation followed, and a few expressive monosyllables were pronounced by Sophia, which only made me feel disgust. How strange it is that of all passions in the world, love should be, in some respects, the most ungrateful—the most unreasonable. It is said that love begets love. The saying is not true: at least I never found it so. It is of all painful things the most painful to be conscious of exciting a sentiment which we cannot return."

"And yet," replied Lady Herbert, for the first time interrupting him, "there is a way of sending our heart and soul into the bosom of another, which is almost magical; there is a way of commanding our spirit to enter into the abode of another, to hover over them, to carry prayer for them to the chamber of their rest, to be about their path and about their bed, which does exercise lordship over them—yes, I believe there is a love which can command love."

Lady Herbert thought of that which she endeavoured to practise on her husband; it had lured him back more than once. She still confided in it; but Lord de Montmorenci only replied, "That is a dangerous doctrine to hold, Lady Herbert; at least, if not regulated, it might become such."

At that moment Miss Herbert and Miss Clermont came towards them. "I have not heard your story out," rejoined Lady Herbert, it has interested me much, you must resume it another time."

"No," he replied, "it is, in fact, all told; I had been jilted, I was not loved in either case: Sophia sought only for an advantageous position in the world. Henrietta could never love any one. My aunt had played me false—I was in all deceived—and wearied and disgusted with every thing and every person by whom I was surrounded, I left England, and travelled over interesting countries; which, however, till long after, had no interest for me; when, at length, I roused myself into a better frame of mind, and loathed the inactivity and total

inertness into which I had fallen. I did not resume that freshness of thought and feeling, which once blighted can never return. The anguish of disappointment has passed, but it has left me such as I am: grave—joyless—in common, but expressive phrase, a bore to myself and others.” At that moment the carriage drove up to the side of the heath, the young ladies produced the result of their occupation, and the whole party returned to Herbert House.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE RECOGNITION.

Thus in assemblies have I seen  
A nymph of brightest charms and mien,  
Wake envy in each ugly face,  
And buzzing scandal fills the place.

GAY'S FABLES.

In the summer of 18— a fête took place, which caused more animadversion than fêtes usually do; for it was supposed to be given by a gentleman in honour of a particular lady, and of course every body moving in the same circle busied themselves to find out who the lady was. Luckily for her, the name (though many were guessed at) never transpired, or else wo be to her, for the favoured one has many enemies; and although the envious crew could not ascertain the precise object for whom this breakfast was given, still, enough information was obtained to fix the attention on two or three ladies, who became, in consequence, the targets at which ill-nature and envy aimed their shafts. Those who were not among the invited, industriously whispered that *the fête* was to be attended by many *queer* persons, that the whole concern was a bad piece of business, that they would not allow their daughters to go to it (though, secretly, they were making great interest to be asked;) while others shook their heads, looked wise, and did all they could, by innuendo, to mar its success. Notwithstanding all these various underhand contrivances, and all the industry of the piqued and non-invited, the fête

was the most brilliant one which had taken place during that and many preceding seasons. And of those who disparaged it—it was well known that to them the grapes were sour.

Lady Herbert was one of the persons who attended the revel; and, while standing on the green lawn, amongst the gay groups sitting and walking on that fairy carpet, which yielded softness and perfume to the pressure of the tread; while exchanging “nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles,” she perceived a lady standing somewhat apart, leaning on a gentleman’s arm, whose countenance was familiar to her, though at first she did not recollect the name of the beautiful person who attracted her attention. Lady Herbert approached her nearer, and, for several moments, watched the flickering colour, which came and went like “colours o’er the morning skies, as bright, as transient too;” but above all, she marked the care-worn expression which imprinted that face, as belonging to one who had known much suffering: and as she noticed this, she suddenly recollected the person with whom she had once been very intimate—who had once been a friend—not, perhaps, quite a friend in all the extent of that term, for it implies more than is generally attached to it, but certainly one who had been more than a common acquaintance; and immediately, on having made this recognition, without pausing to think what the surrounding company might say, Lady Herbert passed through the crowd, and held out her hand to Mrs. Falkland, the divorced wife of Sir Henry Elphinstone. Mrs. Falkland had already recognised Lady Herbert, for she was not changed in equal degree with herself, and she clasped the kind hand held forth to her within her own, with more than a common pressure. Every eye was now fixed on the meeting of these ladies; and Mrs. Falkland trembled so violently, that lady Herbert requested her to sit down on a bench which happened to be near, and placing herself rather before her to shut out the gaze of the crowd, she continued standing and talking to her. Perhaps the one of the three persons who suffered most at that moment, was Colonel Falkland—the husband of the *divorcée*—for he was aware that the attention of the company was drawn to his wife, and the observations which had been made on her and himself had not escaped his hearing; a scowl covered his face, and, to conceal the bitter feelings of mortification, his

countenance assumed an expression of defiance, which was far from being the natural one of his fair and usually bland features. He leant against a tree and tried to address another man who was standing near him, but he could scarcely articulate, and it was a welcome sight when he saw the company retiring into the house, and under various alcoves in which the refreshments were placed. Lady Herbert asked his wife to introduce her to Colonel Falkland, and continued talking to them for some time longer, till Lord de Montmorenci came up to her, and said, "He had observed some vacant chairs at one of the tables in a pleasant alcove, and requested her to avail herself of them before they were taken. There is no time to lose," he added.

But Lady Herbert, who never did a kind thing by halves, turned to Mrs. Falkland, and asked her if they would not also come, looking at Colonel Falkland as she spoke: allow me to introduce Lord de Montmorenci to you, Mrs. Falkland; and Colonel Falkland will, I dare say, be so kind as to take charge of me."

Thus did Lady Herbert considerably arrange the business in favour of her friend, and the latter whispered to her, "I am very grateful for your goodness to me. I shall never forget it. I did not wish to come here. I would far rather not have exposed myself, above all, not have exposed *him* to mortification. But he wished me to come—so I came to please him, it is any thing but pleasing to me; except, indeed, that I have met you, dear Lady Herbert, and your recognition of poor Bella has been a cordial to me.

Lady Herbert endeavoured to stop any farther expressions of gratitude, which distressed her; for she acted, not from a show of kindness, but from genuine goodness of heart. "It is time," she said, "we move on, or we shall lose our chance of seats;" and, taking Colonel Falkland's arm, walked quickly away, Mrs. Falkland and Lord de Montmorenci following them.

Lady Herbert talked much and quickly to her companion, without knowing very well what she was saying—for her spirits were depressed at witnessing the altered appearance of poor Mrs. Falkland, the still beautiful, but evidently dying Isabella; but all her endeavours to divert Colonel Falkland were vain; for his anxious looks were directed, alternately to his wife, and then around the circle whose attention he fancied was still engrossed by her: whereas they had already ceased to think about him or his

wife, every one was engaged in their own immediate pursuits, and though the subject was taken up afterwards, for the time being every one had ceased to think about them.

The day closed amid revelry and apparent joyousness; but if every heart had been laid open, how much of sorrow, of bitterness, and of evil passions would have been found to lurk under those coverings of mirth and pleasure, and apparent good will! The form and ceremony which had attended the opening of the fête, now gave place to dance and song—each individual was busied with their own particular interest—but there were lonely ones, who looked around and said inwardly, “It is all a mockery to me. Such places are not for the desolate in heart.” Why do they attend them?” Perhaps for the sake of others, perhaps to lose a sense of their sorrows for a time. Certain it is, the outward face of the scene was one of beauty, of gaiety, and of delight; every person was *seeking* pleasure, and *some* found what they sought. Certain it is, that all were too much engaged with their own affairs to cast another thought that night on the poor *divorcè*. So when Lady Herbert afterwards left her, Mrs. Falkland sat by her husband in the garden unmolested by the rude stare, and unfeeling remarks which had met her ear more than once in the early part of that day. It was now a beautiful night—one of those which are so rare in this climate, that they may well be prized. The grounds were studded with small lamps, and from every bough, nay, it almost seemed from every leaf, a light depended. The scene reminded some persons who had been in Italy of the Luccioli, and the thought brought back all the endearing reminiscences which attend upon a sojourn in that country, and which once felt can never be obliterated, but which, somehow or other, are generally accompanied by melancholy or by regret, either from self-reproach, or simply because we never can revisit that enchanting country with the same freshness of feeling we have formerly known. The sound of the distant music, of the dancers, the wafted fragrance of flowers, and every concurring circumstance and decoration, combined to make the present scene and hour one of temporary enchantment to the young and the happy. And yet, of all that congregated multitude, how few there were of the latter! how few to whom it *was* a fairy scene, or over whom there *was* any magic exercised! To the many, the coloured lights were only what they were, bits of glass; the garlands

and the decorations, and the show was only the contrivance of the decorator. The place itself a mere citizen's villa, the whole extent of which, in open daylight, would not suffice to be a schoolboy's playground; and, in short, the illusory beauty of the fête had no illusion for the greater part of the company—they had seen a thousand such, they might see a thousand more—they said the same words expressive of delight, which, however, had no real meaning; and the wand of the enchanter waved in vain for them. Ah! the heart must be young, and pure, and fresh, to enjoy any thing; and though it may seem paradoxical, yet it is nevertheless true, that this freshness of mind is more necessary to the enjoyment of factitious pleasures, than to those which present themselves in scenes of nature, and in social or domestic life. The latter brings the weary and the worn, and, it may be, the spotted in heart, *back* to their days of innocence, of peace, and of lustre for the moment.

“They feel the gales that from them blow  
A momentary bliss bestow,  
As, redolent of joy and youth,  
The weary soul they seem to sooth,  
And redolent of joy and youth  
To breathe a second spring.”

But to no one present at *the fête* was the scene fraught with more withering remembrances than to Mrs. Falkland: it had been in similar scenes that, as Isabella Mordaunt, she had shone in the beauty of innocence, when she first entered upon life under the auspices of great and honoured parents; it was in similar scenes, when they gradually palled upon her to satiety, that she had sought that zest of pleasure which they *alone* can never confer, and that she had been whiled away from duty and fallen from her high estate; and though she loved and was loved again, and though she had a thousand amiable qualities, she was any thing but happy. Such love, disguised as it *may* be, and *is* too often disguised, never *has*, and never will confer happiness. And yet of all who severely or who thoughtlessly blamed her, how many had aided and abetted in her downfall; how many were running the same career; how many, not more firm in principle, but more skilled in deceit, had escaped detection and blazed away in an outward reputation of unspotted brilliancy, whose consciences ought to have whispered mercy to a less fortunate companion. After a lapse

of nearly ten years, Mrs. Falkland found herself once again in a situation which brought forward all her regret, all her humiliation. Could she willingly have sought it, or with effrontery have braved it? No! to her it was bitter as gall and wormwood; but she knew that such was the portion appointed to those who, like her, had fallen from the sphere in which they originally shone. But Colonel Falkland, he for whom she had lost herself, her new husband, chose to bring her there; as though the same beloved hand which led her into error was now appointed to give her the scourge of punishment; and she bore it with that beautiful meekness which is the robe of penitence, and clothes the erring once more as in a garb of light. It was not in her own house, among her dependants and friends and children (though even there and by them the goading sting had reached her,) that she had endured the sharpest self-reproaches; but in this festive rout, this flowery scene of perfume and of pleasure, the lash of conscience smote her with unmitigated anguish. The only consoling circumstance which, on after reflection, gave her a momentary satisfaction, was Lady Herbert's recognition of her; but she dared not express this to Colonel Falkland, for fear of offending him. It was not herself alone she humbled by remarking on Lady Herbert's courtesy as being a rare instance of kindness in her sex, but it was her husband whom she would implicate in her disgrace, by adverting to the circumstance as one of unusual occurrence, so she remained silent. How terrible is the restraint which is imposed on persons so situated! How numberless the trivial chances which combine to wound a woman under such a cloud, and long after her sufferings and her shame have made her peace with Heaven, earth still cries out against her! It is most melancholy,—will it never prove a warning to others?

Long before Colonel Falkland proposed leaving the party, his wife was desirous to be gone; but he dreaded doing any thing which could draw down a remark upon himself and Mrs. Falkland. He fancied attention was still awake to observe them, and with the consciousness of deserving animadversion, he was restless and uneasy; he knew not whether to depart, or to remain, unwilling to be the first to go, yet anxious to be gone, and while, in fact, every one by this time was too much taken up with their own interests to cast a thought upon him or his wife, he imagined



that his exit would create a sensation. . Alas! to what shadows of imaginary consequence do we cling, when real consequence is at an end.

## CHAPTER XX.

### S L A N D E R.

The insidious slandering thief is worse  
Than the poor rogue who steals your purse.  
Say, he purloins your glittering store,  
Who takes your gold takes trash: no more,  
Perhaps he pilfers to be fed;  
Ah! guiltless wretch! who steals for bread;  
But the dark villain who shall aim  
To blast thy fair, thy spotless name:  
He'd steal a precious gem away,  
Steal what both Indies can't repay.

COTTON.

THERE is a spirit of detraction pervading the highest classes of female society, which it would be well for the fame of England were utterly abolished; there is a subtle serpent of malevolent envy which, above all, lurks beneath the foliage of the green and beautiful female aristocracy of the land, and darts its poisoned fangs into the domestic privacy of life, and lures the old, as well as the young, to listen to its vile whispers, and to disseminate its venom. It fixes its keen eye upon its victims, and first draws the gaze of society upon the object it intends to immolate, then fascinates and lures them on, till they fall into the snare it has prepared.

Such is the effect produced by forgers of scandal; but it is more than melancholy to add, that this delegate and representative of the evil one, has chosen and found its principal abode amongst the greatest, the youngest, the fairest females of society. It is lamentable to observe how little good will, and forbearance, and mercy bind women together in one common cause of support and defence. Who is the first to point the finger of suspicion at a wo-

man? A sister woman. Who that lives in general society has not observed the self-satisfied smile which plays around the lip of her, who proclaims one of her own rank and station to have swerved from the path of decorum? Who has not observed the interest and curiosity awakened in the listening circle, at the first murmur of some tale of slander? Who does not know that a watch is set upon the young and beautiful, by their compeers, to cast a cloud upon them, and darken the slightest stain which they may incur? Who can be ignorant that this spirit of calumny is the reigning vice of the day? Yet it flourishes unreprieved: no one has been generous enough to step forward and denounce such a spirit as base and unworthy. It is passing strange! and were it not for the alloy which is mingled with humanity, and forces us to behold our corrupt natures in their deformity, it would be scarcely possible to believe that such a love of detraction exists. The law condemns murder; the thief suffers for his crime; the poacher, a few years ago, paid the forfeit of his life for shooting, unlicensed, on an abundant manor; nay, the man who is perishing for want, is condemned for, snatching the morsel of food which is necessary to his existence; the destitute incur the penalty of begging from the affluent; but the great lady who insinuates evil of her neighbour or friend, which is perhaps without foundation, or if it be true, who takes malignant pleasure in disclosing the error of one of her sex, passes unreprieved, nay, is sought out as an amusing person, who has always something entertaining to say. Is it not very sad for one who does not participate in this spirit, to witness and watch the entrance of a young, and at first, innocent being, on the world's stage. She probably receives the homage which is conferred in degree on all that world's aspirants for fame; she marries; it may be, the man of her choice, or it may be not; for a little while she is suffered to sail smoothly down the stream of life; there is a short, blessed space, during which she is allowed to pass without animadversion; but the time is short, indeed; the inquisition is quickly set upon her. She is good, innocent, unconscious of the scrutiny, and it matters not to her, neither does she think that she is the object of malevolent curiosity; but does her husband fail in his attentions to her? is she exposed to temptation? is she weak? does she waver? does she totter on her high pedestal?—then Heaven have mercy upon her! for no earthly

power can deliver her from the net which is drawn around her. Englishwomen are remarkable for being the first to blight their associate's fame; how few stand forth to ward off the scandal; or if, unfortunately, the tale be true, how few judge the fallen with leniency, how backward are the generality of woman to urge in extenuation, the causes which may have led to another's ruin; how slow and averse to endeavour to reclaim the erring, or pour the balm of consolation into the self-condemned spirit! A woman who has sufficient moral courage to do this charitable act, is laughed at, or is herself condemned; none call her kind, none ascribe to charitable or gentle feelings, the conduct she pursues; she is stigmatized with folly, is called good-natured with a sneer, or charged with a love of singularity; but none say, she has a Christian spirit, she acts a Christian's part. Does this severity, this indignation against the frailties of their associates, originate from a rigid love of purity? from those only of unblemished reputation, of high moral worth; in that case, though, it may be deemed severity, it is, at least, justice; but of all those who cast the stone at others, how few can rest their *motive* on this basis; by far the greater proportion are actuated by a love of gossip, or a desire to build their own upon the fragments of another's reputation, or to draw them down to a level with themselves; those who have escaped detection, are the first to fall upon those who have not been so fortunate; and they visit or do not visit such and such a one, not upon the score of virtue, but the score of expediency.

When it became generally known that Lady Herbert had spoken to, and visited her former friend, Mrs. Falkland, some lifted up their hands and eyes in astonishment, and the only excuse the world made for Lady Herbert doing *such an odd thing*, was, that she had always been such an odd woman, she loves to be singular, and affects good nature, but none said, "in Lady Herbert's tongue is the law of kindness." But the person on whom she had conferred the kindness was not slow to acknowledge it—was not presumptuous in its acceptance—she knew it was not her due; but she knew it was given without ostentation, and in a spirit of genuine charity.

"I shall never forget your goodness," said Mrs. Falkland frequently, as she pressed Lady Herbert's hand with that deep sense of her own unworthiness, which made her ten times more an object of interest. One day she followed

Lady Herbert from her drawing-room, and said, falteringly,

"Do not reckon yourself obliged to continue visiting me, I could not endure to think you incurred reproach, even of the malevolent for my sake. You have done enough to prove yourself the kindest, the best. Heaven's mercies and blessings will never be denied to you, you who have such mercy upon others."

Lady Herbert was distressed beyond measure at Mrs. Falkland's words; it gave her no satisfaction to witness a fellow-creature's humiliation; she could not reply, but as tears filled her eyes, she only pressed her hand warmly, and hurried from her presence.

When Lady Herbert returned home, she found it was late, and she dressed in haste, to be ready for her husband, who dined at home; a very short time before, his wife would have marked the day as one of festival; but if we cease to use, or to prize our privileges, we lose them; they slide from our grasp, they fall into abeyance; and so it was again with Lord Herbert in his wife's heart. Often had he quenched the divine love which glowed in her breast for him, and often had a breath of kindness revived the flame; but now, doubtless, the case was altered: even Lady Herbert's love had been greatly cooled. That day, when they sat down to dinner, Lady Herbert saw no glad smile irradiate her husband's countenance, and he became sullen and sharp during the hour of the repast. How unreasonable! and yet men do expect such constancy in respect to the affections bestowed upon them, whatever may be their own crimes, their own deserts. When the fruits were placed on the table, Lady Herbert observed, that the pictures in Colonel Falkland's gallery, were of the very first kind.

Lord Herbert uttered an oath, and asked in an angry tone, "What! have you been in *that* house?"

"Yes, I went to see Mrs. Falkland," was her reply.

"You did! by Heaven, madam, your ladyship is vastly obliging, very condescending, truly, but it would be better that you should consider what you owe to me and Sarah, rather than indulge in your romantic flights of friendship. That Mrs. Falkland is the veriest jade that can be, and her present husband is a disagreeable, consequential fellow. You are always going from one extreme to another; a few months ago, and you would not have the Lanti to sing at a public concert at your house, because, she was not proper,

she was not proper! she was Lennard's mistress, you said; and now you go up before all the world, and accost that Mrs. Falkland as an old friend; you had far better, madam, drop such friendships, and not find fault with people, whom every body agrees to receive as professional persons, paid to amuse them, and conducting themselves as such, very discreetly." Lord Herbert stopped for a moment to gain breath, and his wife replied:

"I knew Mrs. Falkland long ago; I have lived in her house, sat at her feasts, partook of her gaities; I knew her in the time of her prosperity, and though her subsequent conduct does not admit of defence, still, Herbert, I am very sorry for her; I could not meet her again after a lapse of years, during which she has, in as much as in her lies; redeemed her time, and then not address one word of conciliation, and of kindness to her, when all the rest of the world seemed to shun her as a pestilence, and then I felt that not to see her *sometimes*, was as though I had only been kind for a moment, to offend her more afterwards by totally shunning her; had you but seen the pleasure my visit conferred upon her, you would have been glad, Herbert, to think your wife could give a fellow-creature such happiness."

"Pshaw, Mabel, I tell you, you are a fool and worse—whose interests is it your duty to consult in preference to all else? You profess for Sarah extraordinary maternal fondness, and yet, you voluntarily strike up an intimacy with Mrs. Falkland! You are certainly the most inconsistent weak woman that ever existed; but, madam, I command you never to see Mrs. Falkland again; and as to Sarah, if ever I hear of her exchanging words with that *protégée* of yours—you shall repent it."

"I shall obey you, Francis, nor should I have thought of taking Sarah to live in intimacy with poor Mrs. Falkland, although I think her a less objectionable person than many with whom we associate every day; she committed one flagrant act which placed her without the pale of society, and her punishment followed her crime; but she did not cheat her husband by wearing the mask of affection for him, whilst she loved another. She did *not* live on in a series of petty deceits and of intrigue, which sullies and debases the whole mind and character. When she intended to wrong him, she did so openly; she did not remain, bearing the insignia of a good wife, and above all, of a good mother, when she

had neither; she did not live on for years till her children became of an age. (and how soon that age may come, who can say) to see through the flimsy veil of deceit which necessarily accompanies such dereliction from virtue. No! she fled, and became to them at once a beacon and a warning; the crime was heavy, but so has been, so will continue to be, the punishment; she has not called vice, virtue, and virtue, vice. The line of demarcation has been so strongly drawn between the two, that her children cannot mistake them, and those who run may read. As to my own character, Herbert, you are aware that it could sustain no injury from an occasional visit to Mrs. Falkland."

"I have given you my opinion, Lady Herbert; you cannot now pretend ignorance upon the subject; I shall not add more, only, remember."

## CHAPTER XXI.

## THE ANONYMOUS LETTER.

Tout le monde connoît leur imperfection,  
 Ce n'est qu' extravagance et qu'indiscretion,  
 Leur esprit est mechant et leur ame fragile,  
 Il n'est rien de plus foible et de plus imbecile,  
 Rien de plus infidelle et malgré tout cela,  
 Dans le monde on fait tout pour ces animaux la.

MOLIERE.

"MY LORD,

"You are grossly deceived by a woman unworthy of you in every respect, and you are made to pay for the pleasures of others who only laugh at you for your pains. It is not known that you are just returned from the country, and an orgy is held at the Hermitage this night at twelve o'clock, at which, if you choose to be present, a person will await you under the portico of one of the houses on the left side of Park Crescent, who will conduct you thither, when seeing, it is hoped will be believing.

"A FRIEND."

"N. B. All my previous warnings have failed; this is the last. *Beware of the Ides of July.*"

The above letter was put into Lord Herbert's hands as he returned from an excursion into the country on the 15th July 18—; the handwriting was concealed, but the envelope and seal and the paper were not vulgar: it did not appear to have been written by a low person. Lord Herbert, to do him justice, had a proper detestation of anonymous letters, nevertheless this one enforced attention, because it tallied with remarks he had made, and he determined to follow the direction it contained; "and at worst," he said, "I can only have the joke turned against me, should it prove a hoax." The better to avoid this, and to prevent

his being recognised, he threw a coachman's great coat over his clothes, and getting into a hackney-coach, drove to Park Crescent; there he got out and proceeded on foot, walking slowly along. At the door of the last house, a little figure, which appeared to be an old woman with a thick veil over her face, came towards him, and, to his astonishment, thrust a bit of paper into his hand; he read by the light of the lamp, "Trust to the conductor who gives you this;" he did so, and followed the old woman, who, as soon as they got beyond the Colosseum, set off at an amazing pace, so that it was all he could do to follow her. Arrived at the gate of the Hermitage, he wondered how that could be passed, for it was too high and too well fenced with iron spikes to climb over it; but his guide applied a key, and without any difficulty let them both in. With great celerity the latter dropped her woman's attire, and Lord Herbert recognised the Lanti's page, Banyan. Then, he thought, it is true, and she is faithless;—he muttered a few low curses—Banyan put his finger on his mouth—and mastering his rage, he followed the boy, who stationed him on a ladder he had placed there for the purpose, at a window from whence he could distinctly see and hear all that passed within. The usual rabble-rout were of the party, and Ladies Rougemont and Featherstone and the Lanti's sister; the latter were singing together, and singing in all the power of their beautiful voices. The infatuated Lord Herbert listened entranced, and forgot at the moment every thing but the thralldom in which he was held. After a time the music ceased, the persons present made a circle round the room to admit the entrance of the supper-table, and as soon as it was placed, a considerable noise was made at the door of entrance, one or two servants opened the two wings and announced very pompously, Lord Herbert, when, to the real lord's utter surprise and dismay, he beheld a person enter so exactly like himself, that he thought he saw his figure reflected in a glass. Lord Herbert, *the double*, nodded to the ladies, said how d'ye do to some of the men, looked protectingly to the Lanti, and then added in his own most condescending way, "I hope you have not waited for me, I could not get away from the Speaker's confounded dinner, the greatest bore in the world, till the Duchess's ball was nigh over; don't much care for that, only I could not avoid making my bow, and then got into a row with one of those blackguard om-



nibuses which deserve to be annihilated; would not make way for my cabriolet, and it puts me out, to find oneself called upon for slang, in order to give those fellows a proper dressing: beg a thousand pardons, pray don't think of me," looking at himself in the glass. Is it possible, thought the real Lord Herbert, that I can be as ridiculous. I'll smash the fellow in a thousand pieces, for showing me up though, and he made a movement which caused the ladder to shake the half-closed shutter.

"Vats dat, Banyan? look, see."

Banyan obeyed; shook his head; made signs that it was nothing, and resumed his post at the back of his mistress's chair.

Lord Herbert (the double) was now placed in a chair which was always considered to be particularly appropriated to the real Lord Herbert, and he laid down the law on various topics, which made all the company roar with laughter; it was so like, that Lord Herbert himself almost laughed too; but when Sir Charles Lennard (for it was he who enacted the part) called out to the company to ask them what wines they chose of those which he had sent for to Herbert House, "chosen from my choicest cellar," he added, Lord Herbert could scarcely restrain his choler to witness the end of the scene. "This is some of the finest Chianti which was ever imported into the country," said the usurping lord, pouring out the wine, "I kept it for the dinner I intended to give to the Prince of Spain; but, really, he is such a Visigoth, I don't think I shall ever bring myself to the bore of the thing, and it could not be half so well bestowed as it is on the present company." The little black and yellow Italians grinned and bowed, and filling their glasses, rose from their seats, crying, "viva viva, evvè." The mock lord bowed in return, rose and addressed them in a speech.

"Gentlemen—Although I have not the advantage of being able to express in your language, the sense I entertain of the honour you do me, in being my guests on this happy occasion (it was the Lanti's saint's-day,) yet I should think myself deficient in all the laws of courtesy, if I did not endeavour to make my thanks audible for the honour you do me in gracing my board."

"Viva viva, mill' anni," roared the company; and they all sat down again, laughing and carousing, while the principal actor continued to play his part with immoveable

gravity, and from time to time whispered the Lanti, or looked at her with the tenderest glances, and then again, turning to the party, he said, "that venison comes off my own grounds; I hope you like the flavour, and those pine-apples from out my forcing-beds, pretty tolerable size for our sunless climate; I had them fresh from the country to-day, and sent for them to grace our feast; I hope you find them palatable."

"*Squisito!*" said one little-gormandizing monkey of a man, who crammed an immense round down his throat, and put more into his carcass than one would have thought it could possibly have held, and who, ignorant of the joke which was carrying on, enjoyed in good earnest the delicacies which had been provided, at *whose cost*, mattered little to him.

In the mean while Lady Rougemont and Featherstone entered into all the zest of mystification, and at every new speech of Sir Charles Lennard's, cried "Bravo! bravo! There never was any thing so well-done."

Little Banyan evinced unusual pleasure, and stood behind the Lanti, quivering like an imp of mischief, and looking up at the window from whence he knew the real lord was witnessing and overhearing every word that was said.

"Now," he thought, "I have my revenge; I have not been beaten or kicked for nothing." But Lord Herbert, in his hiding-place, was not particularly gratified, for he felt that to make known his being present, would only bring himself into greater ridicule, and it was not very pleasant to witness his choicest viands eaten, and his wines swallowed by such a set of miscreants, and the woman for whom he had been guilty of such lavish expense and folly, enjoying his being cheated and made a fool of. He knew not what course to pursue; he did not want personal bravery, he would have defied them all, but he dreaded ridicule; he shrunk into nothing at the idea of braving that, and preferred enduring the secret sting of being cheated and laughed at by the persons then present, rather than spread the story over the whole circle of his London acquaintance; but rage and dismay were at his heart, and when he saw himself made a laughing-stock of by his friends, and the woman whom he fancied loved him, he received some punishment for the crime he had committed in forsaking his fair and faithful wife for such degrading, such demoniac company; still there was a fascination in the torment; he

did not like to leave any thing unseen, unknown, that he could see or know, and after descending the ladder, a fresh burst of laughter, made him go up again to behold the cause of this renewed mirth; he then beheld, as it were, himself crowned by the Lanti, and the other women winding scarfs around him, whilst he bowed and smiled and said, "rather pleasant this to be so feted; and in one's own house too. Gentlemen, do me the favour to taste this Monte Puleiano; its flavour is peculiar; it was brought to me from Italy by a particular friend of mine, in his own yacht, cost prodigious sums of money, what with duty and one thing or another, but I like to have my things good,—I do not mind expense."

"But how did you get these things from Herbert House?" asked Lady Rougemont, in English.

"Nothing's more easy," he replied, "I wrote a line to St. Simond, and signed my name, (that which I bear at present, you understand) and I found the things all ready for me at the hour I ordered them?"

"Well, but if you were to be found out?"

"Oh! if I were, Herbert is an excellent fellow, he would not say a word to me, because *he dare not*," he added in his own natural tone of voice.

Lord Herbert ground his teeth together; at that moment he observed Banyan leave his mistress's chair, and the next moment he was at the bottom of the ladder. He made signs to Lord Herbert not to go away altogether, but leading him to the door of the gardens, by dumb-show contrived to make him understand that he was to remain there. Lord Herbert, from an impulse of the moment, was inclined to comply, and he had not been there ten minutes when he saw flames breaking out from various parts of the cottage; women's shrieks and men's voices, and a rushing to and fro of servants who had been waiting for their masters, told Lord Herbert it was time for him now to be off, unless he wished to be implicated in the affair. It was evident to him that Banyan was the author of the fire, and he was at last convinced that his friend was a villain, and his mistress worthless.

The next day, the papers were full of the Lanti's misfortune; it was stated her losses were immense, and there was an appeal to a generous public to make up to this favourite singer, by liberal contributions, the ruin of her property; nor was the appeal without avail: several in the first

circles, women as well as men, subscribed magnificently to replace the wealth of the Lanti; and when she left the country, she did so, covered with jewels and gold, and laughing at the folly of the English for being taken in by her, merely because she was a foreigner, and carried her impertinence with a high hand. But the unfortunate Banyan was tried for the crime of incendiarism; and though no proof was brought against him, sufficient suspicion rested upon him to prevent any persons hiring him as an attendant; and he was seen begging in the streets and gaining a morsel of bread in the most abject state of misery. In that pitiable plight Lady Herbert saw the boy, and although she had seen him when he attended the Lanti as a page, she clothed and fed him, and got him placed with some respectable tradespeople, to whom she paid a large sum for taking him into their family; like most of his race, he was as attached to a benefactor as he was revengeful against those who treated him ill; and he conducted himself well in his new situation.

Lord Herbert had received a salutary lesson; he kept his own secret, which he hoped was known only to himself; and the reform in his conduct, which before had been but superficial, was now become sincere and real. He sought for happiness in the bosom of his own family; and he once more found it there: to Lady Herbert's happy astonishment, he proposed spending the autumn at Moreton Park, and thither they went; Sir Charles Lennard's name was never mentioned, and as if the Evil Spirit had been exorcised, his disappearance from among them seemed to be the signal of returning love and peace.

Poor Lady Herbert! she hardly could believe the happy change would last, but she took the present good thankfully, and the meek serenity of her soul imparted that peace to her which the restless anxiety of those who trust in their own wisdom and their own strength, either never can obtain nor understand. The silence of the country alone, after the bustle and noise of a great city, is in itself a striking circumstance; or rather, the still small voice which breathes in the rustling of the leaves and the murmurs of some pebbled brook, or the peculiar rushing sound of the full-eared corn waving its golden fritage, together with the language of birds and the sound of rural labour, all speak to the heart. Oh, yes, doubtless, those who never walk among God's works, never accustom themselves to read the characters which are written on the face of nature, those persons stand in dan-

ger of becoming factitious, hardened, blinded. So thought and felt lady Herbert, as she once more hailed the quietude of the country; to her, it was no scene of dulness or inactivity; a thousand varied occupations courted her attention at every turn of her walk; here there was some new path to make, there, some shrub or flower to be planted; the poor to claim her charity and kindness, the village to adorn, and the interests of all around to attend to. If there is the germ of a danger lurking in the breast of happy England, it is the growing evil of its great landed proprietors forsaking their country houses and flying to watering-places for idle amusement, which, after all, they fail to find. The danger too, of seeking foreign scenes, to the utter forgetfulness of home and its duties, is another source of evil, which may in the long-run prove serious. There is surely a time for all things under the sun; it would be bad if those who really entertain a love of travel, could never indulge it; nay, an exclusion from its enlarging and ennobling effects, would overrun the land with prejudice and false pride; but that is less alarming than the total disunion between great families and their dependents in the country; it is impossible we should not cease to love those who cease to love us: the stranger at his own home will gradually become an alien; distress of a pecuniary kind will force the extravagant to sell their paternal inheritance; the wise and rich, but it may be the sordid and low, will creep into their place and rule tyrannically, and strain the land for gold, and mere gold, till the tie between the rich and poor is broken, and anarchy may scath the land.

These reflections did not actuate Lord Herbert in his determination, to revisit his paternal acres; mortified vanity, disappointed love, if such liaisons deserve the name of love; losses at play, and other transactions, disgusted him with himself, and he sought to lose sight of objects which brought these unpleasant feelings into hourly exercise, by hiding himself in the country. To a mind, however, accustomed to live in a state of factitious excitement and in the whirl of unlawful pleasures, the calm of retirement and the placidity of nature are greater torments than any other; it is like the awakening of an inebriated man who pays the price of his recent debauch, the fever and agony of burning temples and aching bones; the scene to him is not one of renovation, but of mockery, and so it was to Lord Herbert. Sir Gregory, his early friend, had

long since been gathered to his fox-hunting forefathers, and Tom had leapt the leap of life at the end of a glorious chase, which noble death had been immortalized on a racing cup, won some years after by a brother of the turf. Except this memorial of renown and prowess of the Gregorys, not a vestige of them remained; the stable, the stud, the paddocks were all converted into very different uses by the present proprietor of the estate, a rich brewer, who thought of nothing but his barleycorn and the gold into which it would be converted. The females of the family lived and died in a state of quiescent virtue, which Madame Guyon would have canonized. As to Mr. Cruikshanks, he was still alive, but confined to his arm-chair in winter, his arbour in summer, and his memory only surviving to delight him by the records preserved there, of those harmonious sounds which still delighted his ear through the medium of recollected love, when that ear was, in fact, deaf to all actual and present sound. Yes, the genuine love of poetry is a divine love, it is the first and the last love of those on whom it lights from heaven—it breathes its highest strains in the book of inspiration—it thunders in Isaiah's voice—it bears the soul aloft in Job, and in Ezekiel's prophetic numbers—but in the lyrics of the psalmist all is combined; there is no chord in the heart of man which does not alternately respond to the lyre of the son of Jesse—from abject despair to triumphal rejoicing, on every intervening key-note of the heart it touches to awaken the purest, tenderest of its emotions, and gives a grace and a divinity even to mortal feeling.

Lady Herbert frequently visited Mr. Cruikshanks in his cottage; and, as if to make amends to him for the disgust and contempt he had once excited in her, she seemed particularly bent on showing him attention and respect. The old man, in his velvet cap and large wrapping-gown concealing the deformity of his figure, no longer presumptuously officious, but humbly grateful for the least attention, had become an object rather of tenderness and respect than of disgust and contempt. What had been ridiculous and offensive in him had been winnowed by the great sifter and refiner—time; what had been pure and spiritual remained, and was no longer debased by its obscuring alloy—conceit: this is the difference existing between those minds which contain in themselves a genuine nobility of greatness, from those which are only held in estimation from the station

they hold in the world, but are in themselves meager, mean, and jejune. Mr. Cruikshanks was in his latter days respectable. Sir Gregory and his son were forgotten, or only remembered by the peculiar race to which they belonged, long before the schoolmaster's worth began to be understood or prized; but the genuine ore is sometimes separated from the base, and the tares are taken from the wheat even in the harvest of this world. Many a lisping tongue, in the first accents it pronounced, learnt from the schoolmaster's lip the alpha and omega of life; and some among the number, who had crept "like a snail unwillingly to school," looked back upon these days, spent *sub ferula*, as the happiest of their existence, even though the rod had descended upon them, and the tears of penitence or of shame had sometimes trickled down their faces, for they acknowledged that such "loving correction" had afterwards made them great. This was the evening of Mr. Cruikshanks' days not devoid of glory or reward, even though he was poor and decrepit, and deaf; for he lived in a world of his own, and it was a very glorious one, since it contained an essence of the purest of all love—a love of poetry—comprising so much of other love, it might well be called a world of glory. The word glory, like all words, may be so abused, so distorted from its legitimate meaning, that it rests with the discriminating and appreciating few to determine whether it irradiated the school-room and arm-chair of Mr. Cruikshanks or not. In the opinion of the chronicler of his life it shone lustrous over his final years, even to their close; nor is now obscured, but revives in the beings of many who still tread in the path he pointed out to them, and who, if they outran their master in the race, do not forget that it is to him they owe their success.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## THE HOUSEKEEPER'S ROOM AT MORETON PARK.

Love rules the cap, the crown,  
 The kitchen, too, and hall;  
 Where'er you sojourn, or where rove,  
 Love is the lord of all.

"HERE'S a pretty do! Mrs. Trelawny," said Lady Herbert's maid, entering into the drawing room of the lower house—"Here's a pretty do! but I'll not bear it—that is what I won't!" she stopped speaking, from being choked by emotion.

"It's my heart! Mrs. Hanson, what ails you?—why you are all over of a flutter."

"And well I may, Mrs. Trelawny, what do you suppose?"

"I'm sure I can't guess."

"No, nor no Christian alive could; and that's the truth; but, as sure as death, that little Peggy Cox is keeping company with my lord's walet. I never heard o' such thing. Why, after all the fine speeches he's been making to me these two years, and trying to get Uphill Farm into his own hands, all through my interest with my lady, who has been working for it with my lord, and, as I supposed, to settle me in it for life. Well, there's a pretty rascal, Mrs. Trelawny, to make love to Peggy Cox, and intend



making a lady of her. Peggy Cox, forsooth! a beggar's brat's beggar maid, for she and her mistress are no better nor they should be, and that's my opinion of it."

"But, Mrs. Hanson, how did you find this out?"

"Why, I was coming down the front stairs, because they're shortest, and I didn't think my lord was up, and as to my lady, she would not mind, though she had seen me; and just as I came to the turn, I looked about to see that no one was there, when, lo and behold! I spies Mr. Stevenson in deep confab. with the little slut. There he was, for all the world as he has often been with me, one arm round her waist, his muzzle in her ear, and she looking so pleased like; and then she pretended to put his hand away, but it's my belief he only held her the tighter; for on they went talking, ay, I'm sure, above five minutes. I could hardly keep my fingers off her, a little good, for nothing; and at last, would you believe it? he giv'd her a good smack. With that I let fall the night-lamp, for I was taking it down with the bed-candles, as I always do, to be clean. I let fall the night-lamp on their heads, and ran up stairs again, so that I'm sure they could not have guessed who it was. But Mrs. Trelawny, I hope if the oil has daubed the staircase, you won't say it was I;—do, there's a good soul, lay it all upon Peggy Cox: if you'll only oblige me so far, I will do as much and more, for you another time. And you know my lord is so particular, that if he only finds out two or three times what a dirty slut Peggy is, he will turn her out neck and crop; that's what I'm certain of. To go to do such a thing as to behave in that way with Mr. Stevenson! I think the footman was good enough for her, a piece of trumpery that she is."

"Ay, Mrs. Hanson, I don't wonder you are in a rage—it's enough to provoke a saint. I hate them there favourites that Miss Clermont has always been a sort of spy upon us all, and I have my doubts about her. I can tell you, if it hadn't a-been for Mr. Frederick, who is a kind-hearted gentleman, and never got a little prize-money but he gave some of it in a genteel manner to the household, I'd not have seen what I have seen, or borne what I have borne from that madam, without opening my mouth, I can tell you; and now he's gone, and not like to come back again, I will keep a sharp look out, and my lady shall know what I know, or my name's not Trelawny."

"Bless me, Mrs. Trelawny, what do you know? tell me,

that I may tell my lady, that's my place, you know, to tell my lady."

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Hanson, it's as much mine as your'n, for an't I at the head of the establishment?—and, for the matter of that, Mr. Stevenson had no right to keep company with you more nor with Peggy Cox; and so the cat's out o' the bag, and there's the truth o'n't. And if ever Master Stevenson gets Uphill Farm, and he does not place me there as mistress, my name's not Trelawny, that's all."

"You! Mrs. Trelawny; why sure you never have cast your eyes on Dick Stevenson! why he's young enough to be your son!"

"So much the better, Mrs. Hanson; and if you don't think him too young for you, I wonder who has the advantage of years; six of the one, and half-a-dozen of the other, would split the difference, and that's my opinion. But I have no time to waste in talking—there's all my preserves to be boiled—here: a pretty to-do, with a vengeance;" and the housekeeper bustled out of the room, determining a vengeance should be taken.

Poor Mr. Stevenson, "my lord's waiter," led a pretty life of it, as his rival enamoured determined he should do. Such confusion does love make from the cellar to the garret. The loves of the housekeeper's room sowed the seeds of much misery. Servants have more in their power than their masters are in the habit of considering; but they could have no power at all, were it not for the follies or vices of the latter. By whom are persons so well known as by their domestics? there is no dissembling in *their* presence, it would be better perhaps if there was; for though to disguise is not to eradicate error, there is a grace in being ashamed of it, and a hope of amendment when it is felt to be error, which there is not otherwise. Incalculable mischief ensues from the habit of considering servants as though they were stocks and stones; whereas they are the most keen-sighted judges of their master's conduct, and generally rule their own by the example which is set them by their superiors. And so it was in the family of the Herberts. Moreton Park was not a dull English park, with knots of large black elms, and a few head of deer stalking about in their dull prison, all *within a ring fence*, as the newspapers say in their recommendation of a possession to be sold or let,—it was only partly enclosed, and the blue distances which appeared over a considerable quantity of waste ground, rough with the in-

digenous furze and heath, that placed it, carried the fable  
 away to rove over a far tract of country, and conveyed that  
 joyous sense of freedom which alone can render a place gay.  
 Moreton Park, in its sites, of grandeur, but not that me-  
 lancholy grandeur which consists in the knowledge of being  
 closely shut into a domain that is one's own, and that hard-  
 ly a stray rascal can get in to feed upon. There was no  
 pretentious piece of water to stagnate within appointed pre-  
 cincts, which, on a scale however large, conveys always the  
 sense of damp and decay, and is, in fact, unwholesome. No  
 one said, "What a fine piece of water!" to the wandering  
 stream that coursed its irregular way through a wood, or  
 burst into light in the open plain; and though at times it  
 overflowed its banks, and committed trespasses, still bore  
 the healthful characteristic of a lively running water, and  
 not a fine elaborate work of man, it was rather the thing  
 the child of nature running in the wild; it had given birth to  
 much poetry. The margin had been graced by the step of truth,  
 and faithful to the love, the only love. In the wood  
 through which its gentle river flowed there was one spot  
 more delicious than the rest; the ground was moulded  
 into a variety of forms—it was a miniature of some Alpine  
 scenery, only without its snows—not prettily so, but as  
 it were a playful caprice of nature. Here a rocky pinnacle  
 rose bare—and there a ledge of moss and wild flowers em-  
 broidered the under stone; the trees were high and umbra-  
 geous in part—in others of light and waving foliage, that  
 showed the humours of the heavens through the leaves, a  
 leafy net-work. The denizens of the wood, the most se-  
 questered spot; sequestered! yes, but not alone. Here  
 the earliest and the latest carol of the birds were heard,  
 here the most timid of the animal creation sought their  
 and their disport—and here Lady Herbert had come in  
 row and in joy, and in that calm mood of mind when  
 though in mercy, the too sensitive mind is for a time  
 suspended in quiescence. In one and in all of these moods  
 alternately Lady Herbert had sought this retreat, and it was  
 endeared to her by a thousand remembrances, some vague,  
 some distinct, some of wo, some of pleasure, but all in-  
 teresting, deeply, vitally interesting; for it is not incidents  
 alone which make up the tracery of the past—which consti-  
 tute the sum of life, in short—but it is the intensity of feel-  
 ing, and all the shades with which we have entertained and  
 invested these, that stamp us happy or miserable beings.



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